The discursive construction of expert identities in online film reviews
A study of a global, a Latin American, and a Chilean website

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The discursive construction of expert identities in online film reviews: a study of a global, a Latin American, and a Chilean website

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Abstract

One of the several possibilities that the internet provides is the extent to which the notion of expertise has shifted from the realm of professionals and is now more distributed among everyday people. In this thesis, I examine three websites where people get together to discuss cinema: a platform that gathers people from around the world (IMDb), a regional site (Netflix Latin America) and a local one (HiFi Chile). By presenting themselves as experts through their language use, these online reviewers emphasise an aspect of their identities, which is constructed within a process of interactive negotiation, i.e., the reviews are taken up either textually or through the use of the affordances that the sites provide.

In this study, I employ a mixed-method approach that combines digital ethnography, software-assisted manual coding, narrative analysis, and corpus linguistics. A noticeable pattern in language use among these online reviewers is the prominence of references to genre and personal experience. Firstly, reviewers tend to show their knowledge of specific cinematic categories, an aspect that plays a key role within their evaluations. Secondly, users show a tendency to tell 'small stories' about their film-watching experience, which sometimes involve them revisiting certain productions and not only changing their perceptions of these movies, but also narrating transformations in their own lives between each viewing. Overall, users in the data show how knowledgeable they are, as opposed to telling others how much they know about cinema (e.g., by boasting about being experts).

With this thesis, I intend to contribute to research on language and new media, especially within an area that remains largely unexplored such as online reviews and the ways in which posts of this kind show discursive constructions of expertise. This research also adds to the existing studies that look at narratives on online platforms, particularly when it comes to Spanish-speaking people who use stories in order to express their identity.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Overview of the thesis

In this thesis, I explore the ways in which people discursively construct the identity of experts when they write about cinema online. Before focusing on how my own experience as a user of this kind of digital platforms drove me towards this research topic (see Section 1.2), I will briefly outline how research on the subject of expertise not only shaped my thesis even during the final months of writing up, but also in terms of how it sheds light on this matter as part of an ongoing academic discussion.

In 2017, when I was already in the final year of writing this thesis, Professor Tom Nichols published the book *The Death of Expertise: The Campaign Against Established Knowledge and Why It Matters*. The importance of this publication for the purposes of my research is that it puts a key tenet of my thesis, expertise, centre stage. According to Ford (2017: 105), when asked to name the culprit of this supposed demise, most professional experts will immediately blame the internet, particularly in terms of how people can now seemingly bypass professional or institutional experts when it comes to seeking or disseminating knowledge, with the correspondent dangers this entails. As I show throughout this thesis, neither my theoretical framework nor my findings share Nichols' dystopian perspective with regard to the alleged death of expertise, but his point of view does indicate the impact that digital platforms can have on the circulation of knowledge, a phenomenon that can manifest itself on different online platforms. Indeed, also as late as 2017, researchers Tom van Nuenen and Piia Varis published an article in which they studied the discursive construction of expertise in travel blogs, as well as how expertise is negotiated. In contrast to Nichols' standpoint, van Nuenen and Varis emphasise the collaborative aspect of this construction of expertise by drawing on Erving Goffman's notion of *team* (1956).[1]

There are certainly other theoretical insights into expertise, both online and offline (see Chapter 2), but the two views described above already suggest a clear interplay between expertise and the internet, one that encompasses a variety of topics that people discuss

[1] The fact that van Nuenen and Varis (2017) apply the notion of *team* does not mean that their study only shows instances of collaboration; the discursive construction of expertise in their research can at times be contested as well.

online. Whether it is politics, the economy, sports or popular culture, to name a few, users shape and negotiate different forms of knowledge through their digital media engagements. In the next section, I discuss how my own experience as an internet user led me to build an interest in the ways in which people present themselves as experts online, particularly when it comes to writing about cinema.

1.2. Research motivations and aims

My interest in online film forums first started as a user, around 2002, when I began visiting IMDb and reading —but rarely posting on— the discussion forums of this site after watching a film. During that decade, my curiosity about this website and its message board only remained at a user level,[2] but when I started my MSc studies in 2012, I began to pay more attention to online communication from an academic standpoint. More specifically, I focused on discourse analysis as a method that allowed me to answer the research questions I had at that moment, and that helped me to realise to what extent online interactions had the potential to be examined, as well as the crucial role that language played in them. My interest grew even more after reading computer-mediated communication (CMC) studies, in general, and research that applied ethnography to digital platforms (e.g., Hine, 2000; Miller & Slater, 2000), in particular. This awareness resulted in me observing the ways in which users of IMDb interacted with each other on these platforms through language and how they got their points across: whether they thought that the film in question was good or bad, if they agreed with the other users or not, how they expressed that agreement or disagreement, etc.

It is important to add that my research motivation for this thesis was to first concentrate on a forum such as IMDb not only because of my familiarity with how it works in general, but also due to the specific understanding I had gained of how interactions tend to occur on this website. Moreover, focusing on a forum would allow me to observe this group of movie enthusiasts as a form of community that gets together to talk about a specific topic. Nevertheless, even if IMDb seemed like an interesting alternative due to its reach in terms of its users from all over the world, including a site that consisted of

[2] Digital communication researchers such as Claridge (2007) use *discussion forums* and *message boards* interchangeably. Consequently, and although I use the term *discussion forums* more frequently in this thesis, I will also utilise *message boards* as a synonym.

participants from my country (Chile) would not only allow me to analyse local linguistic expressions I am familiar with, but also give me the opportunity to compare an international platform with a local one. I selected HiFi Chile because it is one of the sites from my country where there are active discussions about cinema and it seemed to be a better option than another message board called Fotech, where movies are also talked about, but which often exhibits a preponderance for GIFs over text. I also realised the importance of including a website whose model has changed how people consume movies and TV such as Netflix (more details in Section 3.2.4). By choosing to examine Netflix Latin America, I would also be able to study the posts of users that belong to my culture and to others that are part of the same region, and who speak the same language (Spanish), which would allow me to incorporate the study of Latin American reviewers' language use, in general, and Chileans' linguistic practices, in particular. As I argue (see Section 3.2.2.4), studies that focus on the Chilean context have been particularly scarce within digital communication.

By including these three platforms, I made the decision to focus on common-identity communities (i.e., where people get together because they share similar interests, among other features) instead of common-bond communities (i.e., where users have a socially-oriented goal, whether it is making or maintaining friendships or followers) (Schwämmlein & Wodzicki, 2012; for more on this, see section 2.4.2.). Thus, I chose to concentrate on the aforementioned websites instead of social networking sites such as Facebook or Instagram. With regard to the importance of what brings people together on social media,[3] scholars such as Baym have analysed communities that comment on forms of popular culture such as television (1995a, 1995b, 1996, 2000) and music (2007), but cinema seems to have not received much attention. Indeed, Androutsopoulos argues that 'cinematic discourse', i.e., "a contextualised approach to film as a site of sociolinguistic representation, including its relations to production and/or reception and the sociolinguistic knowledge that it articulates and presupposes" (2012: 139), has been under-examined within sociolinguistics. Although my thesis does

[3] Even though *social media* can be associated with newer platforms than web forums such as Facebook or Twitter, Kytölä argues that he does not see why "earlier interactive formats and forms of communication should not be regarded as 'social'" (2013: 114). Other scholars such as Page (2012b) and Page, Barton, Unger and Zappavigna (2014) also include discussion forums in their description of social media. Moreover, Scott and Orlikowski (2012) discuss a type of social media in which people come together because of a common interest and exchange recommendations, reviews and advice, e.g., Netflix or Amazon. In light of the above, I will use the term *social media* to refer to the sites included in my data.

not look at production, it does focus on the way in which movies are discussed, particularly as far as quality is concerned.

With this thesis, I also intend to contribute to research on language and new media, specifically with respect to online reviews, where "we rarely stop to think about the numerous linguistic choices that were involved in the actual construction of those texts" (Vásquez, 2014a: 1). Furthermore, although there have been analyses of stories in digital communication, researchers who focus on narrative have pointed out how these studies are still scarce (De Fina, 2015, 2016). As I argue in this thesis, that scarcity is particularly noticeable within research that concentrates on Latin American sites and the extent to which Spanish-speaking people use narratives to discursively construct their identity.

1.3. Research questions

My research questions are the following:

- What are the most common linguistic resources that users employ when they share their evaluations of films?
- In what ways do users deploy references to cinematic genres in order to construct expertise?
- What role do narratives play in the discursive construction of 'expert' identities?

While the first research question remained essentially unmodified since the early stages of this thesis, both the second and third research questions changed during the course of the data analysis. As I explain in the next section, references to genre and narratives of film-watching experiences are issues that stem from the findings in Chapter 4, my first analytical chapter, and which I examine in detail in Chapters 5 and 6, respectively.

1.4 Structure of the thesis

Having already provided an overview of the thesis, my research motivations and aims, as well as my research questions, Chapter 2 concentrates on the theoretical underpinnings that guide this study, and the gaps I have identified. Chapter 3 sets out to describe the three sites the data includes, and to provide my methodological framework, that is, a mixed-method approach that combines quantitative and qualitative perspectives. In Chapter 3 I also discuss the ethical considerations required to protect the users of these sites when I discussed my findings. Chapters 4, 5 and 6, in turn, constitute the data analysis.

In Chapter 4, using a top-down approach that combines corpus linguistics and coding, I explore the most common lexico-grammatical resources that online reviewers use in their evaluations of films. The analysis of keywords, multi-keywords, stances, and *Discourse-level evaluation strategies* (see Section 3.6.3 for a full description of these strategies) yields specific patterns in terms of language use within these posts. Namely, reviewers tend to reference different cinematic genres, as well as how they *rewatched* certain films and the ways in which both their lives and opinions of the films may have changed between each viewing. Furthermore, the prominence of epistemic stances sheds light on the extent to which participants offer their opinions with a high degree of certainty, whereas the frequency of attitudinal stances, although less salient than their epistemic counterparts, shows how attitudes and feelings also shape the evaluations in the data. I look at these findings in more detail in the subsequent analytical chapters: Chapter 5 focuses on references to genre, whereas Chapter 6 looks at the narratives that are embedded into these reviews.

In Chapter 5, I use corpus linguistics, coding and digital ethnography to analyse, as stated above, the ways in which users include cinematic genres within their reviews as a way to construct expertise. As I argue, showing knowledge with regard to genres involves a cumulative experience by which audiences become increasingly familiar with what a given genre entails. I also point out how other categories emerge within reviewers' evaluations, which pertain to issues such as time and the negative stances that Hollywood cinema seems to trigger. Moreover, I show that the sites' design —and,

thus, their affordances and constraints— shape how their members align with one another, as well as the role that references to genre play in this scenario.

Chapter 6 focuses on the narratives that are embedded into the reviews. The analysis of the data is informed by a mixture of narrative analysis, coding and digital ethnography, which indicates the central role that personal experience has when it comes to these *small stories* of film-watching. In this sense, I propose to add *multiple-viewing stories* to the already existing types of small stories (see Georgakopoulou, 2007). Furthermore, a pivotal aspect of the small story framework that is present in the data is how some of these narratives are co-constructed through, for instance, *second stories* and posts where users' memories are shaped collectively through the discussion of particular films. Within these co-constructions, participants align with one another, a process wherein *knowing participation* (Georgakopoulou, 2016) is essential. Finally, I argue that, within the *participation frameworks* (Goffman, 1981) of these communities, specific users tend to respond to their peers through storytelling, especially when they fulfil roles such as being Original Poster (OP) on IMDb.

Finally, Chapter 7 contains the conclusions of the thesis, including a summary of my findings, which explores the results outlined above in more detail; the contributions I intend to make with this study; and the alternatives for further research.

Chapter 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I will present and discuss the main theoretical concepts of this thesis. My intention is, firstly, to position this study as part of research on computer-mediated communication that prioritises the role that context plays within digital media, as well as a study that moves away from the technological-determinism that characterised earlier studies within this field. With this objective in mind, I explore the different stages, or *waves*, of research on CMC, including their key findings and main concerns. Moreover, context is also essential with respect to the approach to the notion of identity that I adopt in this thesis, that is, one that is shaped through interaction, instead of a static notion. As I shall maintain, when it comes to writing online reviews, *vernacular* practices play an essential role in terms of how these reviewers present themselves through their language use, which, in turn, constitutes a contrast with the formal discourse of professional film critics.

Due to the focus on identity as a process that is constructed collectively, I will also stress the importance of concentrating on notions such as communities. As I will note, the study of online interactions can benefit from the application of tenets such as *alignment* and *participation frameworks*. The former is a still unexplored notion when it comes to digital communication, as opposed to its most frequent use within Conversation Analysis and discursive psychology, but the benefits of applying this concept to online interactions have already been pointed out (see Georgakopoulou, 2016). The latter has also been used to analyse digital media, but not extensively, in terms of how particular participation frameworks shape instances of storytelling (De Fina, 2016).

The consideration above regarding the scope for notions such as alignment and participation frameworks in digital communication is not the only gap I have identified in regards to the existing literature. As mentioned in Section 1.2, while online discussions on popular culture have received scholarly attention from the perspective of television (Baym, 1996; 2000) and music (Androutsopoulos, 2007b; Baym, 2007), a in-depth study of the ways in which online users engage with films seems to be lacking,

which constitutes a gap I aim to fill in this thesis. Furthermore, I draw on Vásquez's claim (2014a: 1) regarding how online reviews have remained mostly unexplored in language and discourse research. My aim, thus, is to examine online reviews, with a specific focus on film evaluations.

2.2. Sociolinguistics and computer-mediated communication

This part of the theoretical chapter will start by looking at the first, second and third waves of sociolinguistic studies on CMC. As noted in Section 2.1, by doing so, I intend to position this thesis as a study that focuses on aspects that the latest *waves* prioritised, as opposed to the main concerns that mainly characterised the first *wave* of research on CMC. After that, I will concentrate on the sociolinguistics of globalization, with a particular focus on concepts such as translocality, localization, semiotic mobility and the resistance that popular culture from the United States can cause. Finally, I will provide an overview of sociolinguistic and CMC studies on online reviews and web forums, with the intention of first providing definitions for these two concepts, and then summarising the research done on those two platforms, as well as the potential room for contributions.

2.2.1 Computer-mediated communication: first, second and third wave

One of the earliest works on CMC was carried out by Herring (1996a, 1996b). A year after the publication of the first journal dedicated to the subject, the *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, Herring (1996a) was in charge of the first edited volume on CMC. One of the main objectives of these first studies, as scholars such as Kytölä (2013: 111) have mentioned, was a tendency to seek parallels between writing online and spoken conversation. Another key concern of this period, commonly known as *the first wave* of CMC studies, was the distinction between synchronous forms of digital communication (instant messaging, e-chat) and asynchronous interactions (discussion boards, newsgroups, mailing lists) (see Androutsopoulos, 2006: 420).

As we can see from this focus on the medium above other possible aspects (such as sociocultural context, the purposes of communication, etc.), there was a technical determinism, that, as Locher states, meant that "the patterns observed were explained primarily by drawing on the mediated aspect of the communicative act" (2010: 2). This tendency led to general claims in the analyses and the discussions of findings such as 'Netspeak' (Crystal, 2001), or —in other words— the language of the internet, with its corresponding subdivisions, e.g., 'the language of e-mails' or 'the language of chatrooms', etc. Further attempts to analyse the language of CMC from this first wave of studies also set out to describe language online through generalisations such as 'electronic language' (Callot & Belmore, 1996) and 'interactive written discourse' (Ferrara, Brunner & Whittemore, 1991). The data collection, in turn, was often carried out randomly, that is, without making connections with social or discursive contexts (Androutsopoulos, 2008)). Such concerns were intertwined with aspects such as genres, linguistic creativity and innovation, albeit without nuanced or situated perspectives, i.e., without taking into account the context in which these issues took place (Georgakopoulou & Spilioti, 2015).

The need to rethink the aforementioned approaches to CMC was the basis of what is considered the *second wave* of CMC studies, "informed by pragmatics, sociolinguistics, and discourse studies" (Androutsopoulos, 2008: 1), which meant "a shift of focus from medium-related to user-related patterns of language use" (Androutsopoulos, 2006: 421). During this second wave of studies in CMC, scholars also saw that things were "much messier and more complicated than was previously thought of" (Georgakopoulou, 2006a: 549), for instance, in terms of how the connections between language and cultural processes can be varied and subtle. Accordingly, they became more cautious not to argue that technological mediation was the only explanation for the patterns they observed (Locher, 2010: 2). Some of the main features that researchers of the second wave focused on, thus, were language and social identity, language variation, interaction, and multilingualism (Androutsopoulos, 2006: 423-430). Paying attention to multilingualism, for instance, resulted in non-English data becoming more frequent (see Danet & Herring, 2003, 2007; Durham, 2003; Sperlich, 2005; Thurlow & Mroczek, 2011). In this regard, Gorham, Lunde, and Paulsen (2014) describe 'the multilingual turn in CMC' that took place as another consequence of the aforementioned shift from media-focused to user-focused research. Moreover, Goggin and McLelland (2009)

emphasise how, even if these technologies of communication can have a global reach, they are situated in cultures of use that are local (see Section 2.2.2).

An aspect that gains relevance due to the aforementioned shift to user-related studies is online ethnography. Androutsopoulos, in fact, argues that an ethnographic perspective seems indispensable for a "sociolinguistic approach that takes online communities and discourse as it starting point rather than the medium and its modes" (2006: 423). I will provide more details about digital ethnography elsewhere (see Section 3.6.1), but, from the standpoint of CMC research, it is relevant to highlight the extent to which it has been mentioned as a way of studying the context of communities that are formed online. In this regard, online ethnography can allow us to understand how CMC plays a part "in the (re)formation of the micro-cultures and shared interactional histories not just in purely online communities but also in existing social relations" (Georgakopoulou, 2006a: 552).

Another change the second wave brought was that researchers started contacting internet users directly through interviews, surveys, and participant observation, together with the analysis of log data,[4] but the exclusive study of log data still prevailed (Androutsopoulos, 2008). The motivation of incorporating offline contact with online users to a greater extent is what triggered the rise of a "'third wave' that would more solidly integrate offline research findings with the online ones" (Kytölä, 2013: 113). An example of how this integration could be achieved came in the form of Androutsopoulos' (2008) discourse-centred online ethnography (DCOE). I will focus on DCOE in more detail in Section 3.6.1, but it is important to note that DCOE looks at aspects such as language diversity and incorporates a more multimodal perspective, incorporating platforms from what is known as the 'Web 2.0' such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, along with others which were more popular during the first decade of the 21st century, e.g., MySpace. Thus, this third wave of CMC studies values "both the detailed, often interactional-sociolinguistic analysis of 'log data' and participant perspectives and discourse community dynamics" (Kytölä, 2013: 114). In addition, some of the focal concerns of the third wave of research on this field have to do with critical approaches to ideologies and discourses of digital communication, namely the

[4] 'Log data' will be understood as "characters, words, utterances, messages, exchanges, threads, archives, etc." (Herring, 2004: 339) that can be found online.

extent to which issues such as surveillance and control as forms of power emerge on online platforms (Georgakopoulou & Spilioti, 2015: 5).

As argued above, the second wave of CMC studies saw the emergence of research that dealt with issues such as multilingualism and, in what is particularly noteworthy for the purposes of this thesis, how communication technologies with a global reach can be taken up by users from the perspective of their own localities, an interest that the third wave kept within its main features. Another issue that is of particular relevance for this study is the importance that both the second and third wave gave to context, and how the focus is on what users do with the technology available, as opposed to the technologically deterministic view that the first wave entailed.

2.2.2 Sociolinguistics and globalization

This thesis deals not only with films people from all over the world can watch, but also with websites where users from different countries can interact. Due to this, in this section I provide an overview of research that has explored the connections between language and globalization. By providing a summary of these concepts, and shedding light on the different aspects they focus on, I argue that some of these tenets, such as *semiotic mobility*, *localization*, and *translocality* seem particularly fitting for the platforms I analyse in this study.

The complexity that comes with studies that concentrate on language and globalization is that there are not only different positions as to the state of the latter process, but also to the way in which language relates to it. In regards to globalization itself, Coupland frames it through the perspective of a reshaped community life, due to private sector companies that became 'global', 'multinational', or 'transnational', thereby outgrowing their local territories and transforming these realities (2003: 467). Giddens (2002) was already questioning at the beginning of this century whether globalization was a new — and real— historical phenomenon, or if it only represented an analytic shift, one in which the questions were new, but the phenomena were old. Moreover, Blommaert states that these processes may not be new in substance, but they are "in intensity, scope and scale" (2010: 1). There have also been considerations as to how it is more of a 'patchy' than a 'global' experience (Coupland, 2003: 470). With respect to the

relationship between these two aspects, different manners to refer to it—which, in turn, encapsulate different tenets— have been proposed. Kytölä (2013: 119) offers an overview of these terms, which include *language and globalization* (Androutsopoulos, 2010; Coupland, 2010; Fairclough, 2006); *language in globalization* (Blommaert, 2010); and *sociolinguistics of globalization* (Blommaert, 2003, 2010; Coupland, 2003).

A notion that also explores the connections between the local and the global is that of *glocalization*, which Ritzer (2003: 193) defines as "the interpenetration of the global and the local, resulting in unique outcomes in different geographic areas". Although early research on *glocalization* (e.g., Robertson, 1995) put it forward as a way to respond to views on globalization that overrode locality, later work on the matter (Giulianotti & Robertson, 2007) recognises that *glocalization* involves both heterogeneous and homogenous processes. An example of this is what happens with the term *football* and how it is used to refer to different sports (e.g., in the UK and the US), with different statuses, depending on the territory (i.e., heterogeneity), as well as universal rules that international institutions decide on and that guide how football is played (i.e., homogeneity). As I will point out below when I discuss the notion of *translocality*, Blommaert (2010) drives the criticism towards *glocalization* a step further.

Other concepts that also explore the interplay between the global and the local have been applied to the study of digital communication, such as *superdiversity* and *translocality*. The former was first proposed by Vertovec (2007) and later expanded on by scholars such as Blommaert and Rampton (2011) in order to analyse urban spaces where a high level of multiculturalism and linguistic diversity can be observed. Digital communication researchers have also applied this concept to online platforms (e.g. Leppänen, Kytölä, Jousmäki, Peuronen & Westinen, 2014; Varis & Wang, 2011). Nevertheless, the notion of *superdiversity* and its potential use to study digital platforms has been put into question: Heyd (2014: 46) argues that, if we follow Vertovec's (2007) claims in regards to it representing both "the diversification of diversity" (p. 1025) and a type of complexity that allegedly surpasses anything previously seen, [5] then it would stand to reason to ask ourselves exactly how complex or diverse our data must be for it to truly be 'superdiverse'. In the case of my data, this consideration seems rather fitting

[5] Even though Vertovec (2007) refers specifically to the UK, the questions he poses, e.g., the alleged 'diversification of diversity', have informed the application of *superdiversity* to a wide array of realities beyond the UK.

for one of the sites I study, which mostly —if not exclusively— consists of people from only one country (see Section 3.2.2 for more details). Keeping this in mind, in turn, casts doubt as to whether *superdiversity* is indeed the most suitable tenet to analyse the specific sites that this study contains. Even though Kytölä (2015: 384) identifies *superdiversity* as "promising for the study of translocal digital communication", thereby establishing a theoretical link between *superdiversity* and *translocality*, the former seems to focus primarily on the aforementioned 'diversification of diversity', whereas the latter pays more attention to the actual interplay between the local and the global. Kytölä himself provides an illustrative definition of *translocality* in this regard, drawing on Hepp (2009a, 2009b) and Nederveen Pieterse (1995), and describing it

> [F]irst, as a sense of *connectedness* between locales where both the local and the global are meaningful parameters for social and cultural activities and, second, as a fluid understanding of *culture* as outward-looking or exogenous, characterized by hybridity, translation, and identification (p. 371; *emphasis in original*).

In a similar vein, Blommaert (2010) expresses his preference for *translocalization* over the aforementioned notion of *glocalization*. For him, the latter underestimates the resilience of the local within the influence of the global (p. 23), whereas the former takes into account the extent to which localities can remain "as local as before" (p. 79) even after the uptake of global cultural flows. If we shift our attention to research on digital communication that has focused on the translocal, Uimonen (2009) analyses the introduction of the internet at an arts college in Tanzania, and, similarly to Blommaert's (2010) aforementioned statement, argues that the local persists despite the translocal interchange that the internet provides. However, Uimonen does stress that the possibility of interacting online not only facilitated social relations for individuals who were geographically dispersed within different areas of Tanzania, but also allowed the participants to find common points of interest among them. Likewise, Leppänen, Pitkänen-Huhta, Piirainen-Marsh, Nikula and Peuronen (2009: 1080) argue that Finnish young people's engagements with new media go beyond local or global identifications and are, instead, "increasingly translocal", i.e., someone's nationality may be less significant than having shared values, interests, or ways of life. Leppänen *et al*. (2009) also conclude that *translocality* in their data is particularly visible in terms of language choice, through the coexistence and mixing of different languages, genres, registers and

styles. In a similar vein, Tagg and Seargeant (2014) also focus on language choice, from the perspective of how it becomes a salient audience design strategy (Bell, 1984; see Section 2.4.4) on translocal social networking sites, especially within multilingual communities. As I argue in the analysis of the data (see Section 5.4.2), even though having a shared interest (i.e., cinema) seems to be a more significant aspect that brings these communities together than their nationality, local resources such as the use of slang terms can still be noticed within the reviews.

One of the key changes, then, that globalization brings, and which has a strong effect on language use, is the distortion of the boundaries between the global and local. Blommaert stresses that this process

> [F]orces us to think about phenomena as located in and distributed across different scales, from the global to the local, and to examine connections between these various levels in ways that do not reduce phenomena and events to their strict context of existence (2010: 1).

Mobility is indeed a key component of this stage: in fact, it is referred to by Blommaert as 'the great challenge' for sociolinguists, since he argues that the dislocation of not only languages, but also language events from their fixed position in terms of time and space, "will cause the paradigm shift we are currently witnessing to achieve success" (2010: 21).

The re-examination of the global/local, on the one hand, and the mobility of resources, on the other, has resulted in situations where mobile codes "become local resources, embedded in local patterns of value-attributions" (Blommaert, 2005: 139). From a sociolinguistic viewpoint, as Androutsopoulos (2010: 204) notes, the focus has been put on this circulation of resources and how they are re-embedded in new sociocultural platforms (Blommaert, 2003, 2005; Pennycook, 2007). A notion that pertains to how resources are re-embedded is that of 'locatization', which has different meanings depending on the academic or professional field in question, but that Androutsopoulos (2010) applies to refer to the 'generic counterpart' of globalization, and defines as

> [A] discourse process by which globally available media content is modified in a (more or less salient) local manner, involving some linguistic transformation to a local code and an orientation to a specific audience, defined by means of language choice. Localization in this sense is a specific type of construction of 'linguistic locality' as a response to globalized popular culture (p. 205).

Within this interdependence of global/local, Androutsopoulos (2010: 205) concentrates on the notion of 'semiotic mobility', a concept that involves "the circulation of signs across time and space, and their disembedding from and re-embedding into social and semiotic contexts", which draws on Blommaert (2003), Chouliaraki and Flaircough (1999), and Coupland (2003). The notion of semiotic mobility views cultural globalization as an enhanced circulation of cultural artefacts, which cross not only national, but also ethnolinguistic borders (Androutsopoulos, 2010: 205; see also Crane, 2002). Similarly to what I argued above regarding the importance of the internet within globalization, Deumert (2014) stresses how digital platforms play a relevant part in the circulation of the aforementioned cultural artefacts, since communication technologies facilitate the "global mobility of knowledge, ideas and semiotic forms" (p. 116). Likewise, Seargeant and Tagg (2014) stress the pivotal role that technologies play in terms of how globalization can change both our social and cultural relations.

The internet thus allows linguistic and semiotic resources to travel across space and time, a process in which global signs can be recontextualized in order to convey local meanings in everyday online communication, and local signs can also gain prominence in a global manner rather quickly (Deumert, 2014: 116-117). As I will indicate in the data analysis (see Section 5.4.2), within online reviews of films, notions such as *localization* and *semiotic mobility* are key to understand the ways in which cultural artefacts from cinema (e.g., genres, dialogues, titles, etc.) circulate throughout the translocal spaces where reviewers exchange their opinions. It is, nonetheless, essential to concentrate on recontextualization in order to properly understand how the aforementioned 'globally available media content' gets re-embedded into semiotic and social contexts (Androutsopoulos, 2010). The notion of recontextualization can be traced back to Bauman and Briggs' (1990) account of the link between decontextualization, entextualization and recontextualization. Decontextualization involves the selective extraction of stretches of discourse, but in order for this to happen, that discourse has to be rendered extractable through entextualization, i.e., the process "of making a stretch of linguistic production into a unit—a *text*—that can be lifted out of its interactional setting" (Bauman & Briggs, 1990: 73; emphasis in original). After said process, the text in question can be recontextualized in new social contexts (Bauman & Briggs, 1990: 74). Yet, if one pays attention to Bauman and Briggs' theorizations, the focus is on text and not necessarily on other semiotic means,

something that Jones (2009) observes and which he addresses by defining entextualization as "the process through which actions are turned into semiotic mediational means for taking subsequent actions" (p. 287).

As argued above, semiotic mobility can often involve media content, specifically forms of popular culture "such as radio talk, popular music, or lifestyle magazines" (Androutsopoulos, 2010: 205).[6] Following this relationship between language, popular culture and globalization, Phillipson (1992, 2003, 2010) has described a type of 'linguistic imperialism' that Hollywood allegedly has contributed to perpetuate. That aspect, however, has to do with film dialogues themselves, which fall outside the purposes of this thesis, but what is interesting is that it sheds light on the dominant role that Hollywood has in the cinematographic industry from a linguistic perspective. Thus, exploring how media content from a globally available industry such as Hollywood is dis-embedded and subsequently re-embedded into digital platforms where people share their reviews of films is one of the aims I set out in this thesis; what is more, reviewers in the data tend to do so through a predominantly negative stance on Hollywood (see Chapter 5). In fact, Sardar and Davies (2002) claim that 'the hamburger culture' has eradicated Third World cultures and installed people and characters such as Sylvester Stallone, Bruce Willis and Homer Simpson all over the world (p. 120). Although their view is somewhat dystopian and perhaps too critical of the US, it does effectively address the power that this country has in terms of expanding its popular culture —and films, particularly— to other territories. However, by doing so, the US has encountered resistance on some levels, as Sardar and Davies claim

> Through movies and television, America has not only told the stories that form its own mythic vision, but also exported them to the rest of the world through its dominance of global popular culture and the American idea of self. Yet far from providing what Pierson called a 'universal language' for discussion of what matters, the American myth works to circumscribe debate, create opposition and fuel antagonism (2002: 138).

This opposition, according to Sardar and Davies (2002), comes from sectors that do not see the US as the last beacon of light for mankind, but as the primer mover of a world where rulers and ruled, masters and dependants, is perpetuated. Furthermore, some of

[6] With respect to the importance of forms of entertainment within studies of language, culture, globalization and engagement, Pennycook (2007) argues that it is hard to see how can any research that encompasses these issues be done without "dealing comprehensively with popular culture" (p. 81).

the cultural resistance may also come from the US's tendency to remake European movies, where "[t]he American repackaging machine reduces all experiences, no matter what their cultural context, to American experience" (Sardar & Davies, 2002: 132), and from their over-use of patriotic imagery in all forms of popular culture (Sardar & Davies, 2002: 138). Thus, Sardar and Davies talk about instances where this global popular culture is not adapted or localized by people; quite the contrary, it is contested. As noted above, I will explore in detail to what extent this contestation takes place within the online reviews contained in the data (see Chapter 5).

The internet, then, offers a variety of platforms whereby users can indeed express views such people's opinions regarding Hollywood cinema. In the next two sections, I focus on the research that has been done within sociolinguistic and CMC on both online consumer reviews and discussion forums.

2.2.3 Sociolinguistics, CMC and online consumer reviews

Mudambi and Schuff (2010) define online costumer reviews as "peer-generated product evaluations posted on company or third party websites" (p. 186). In terms of their features, online reviews are chiefly a text-based, asynchronous and often anonymous genre of CMC (Vásquez, 2014a: 3). Another term that has been used to refer to them is electronic-word-of-mouth (eWOM), which has been described as "[a]ny positive or negative statement made by a potential, actual, or former costumers about a product or company, which is made available to a multitude of people and institutions via the Internet" (Henning-Thurau, Qwinner, Walsh & Gremler, 2004: 39). Regarding eWOM, Vásquez (2014a) maintains that, in today's world, with its increasing mobility and interconnectivity, "it has become very common to rely on the eWOM of strangers, which can be freely and easily accessed on websites comprised of enormous user-generated databases" (p. 3).

The types of products that may be reviewed have been classified by Nelson (1970: 312) as either 'search goods', i.e., products whose quality can be investigated before purchasing them, or 'experience goods', i.e., those that need to be sampled or purchased in order to properly evaluate their quality. Some examples of the former are furniture, hardware, sporting goods, etc., whereas the latter comprises automobiles, appliances,

music, radio, television, etc. (see Nelson, 1970: 319 for the full list). Although Nelson does not include films within 'experience goods', Vásquez (2014a) does so in her study.

The definitions and findings in regards to online reviews described above, however, do not come from sociolinguistics, but from areas such as marketing, tourism, economics and computing sciences. As Vásquez states, online reviews "have remained relatively unexamined in language and discourse studies" (2014a: 1). In the case of film reviews, some of the work available has been carried out from an information science standpoint, with a focus on review prominence (Otterbacher, 2011). Other scholars came from computational fields, and were looking to develop models for sentiment analysis, such as Pang, Lee and Vaithyanathans (2002) and Turney (2002). Among the scarce research with a discursive viewpoint that has covered film reviews, Taboada (2011) analysed them with regards to their stages and lexicogrammatical choices, and Vásquez (2014a) included film reviews in her book *The Discourse of Online Consumer Reviews*, which also includes reviews of restaurants, hotels, consumer goods, and recipes. One of the former's most insightful claims for the purposes of this thesis is that "[t]he online movie review is typically written by a non-professional, with the intention of providing information to an audience, presumably made up of peers" (Taboada, 2011: 251). The issue of who reads these online film reviews differentiates them from their more traditional counterparts (e.g., those written by a newspaper critic)

> The difference lies in the audience: Whereas a newspaper critic is considered a professional, and therefore different and distant from his or her readers, *online authors write for each other*, and *emotional content and personal experience play an important role*, just as they do in school-based reviews. *A major difference with professionally written reviews is the spontaneity of the writing*. Whereas reviews in the printed media are typically checked by a copy editor, and revised by the author himself or herself, online reviews are likely produced without revisions, and posted without mediation (Taboada, 2011: 251; *my emphasis*).

The quote above is particularly relevant for the present discussion. Firstly, it refers to a type of online discourse that comes from a nontraditional sector, that is, from internet users instead of professional film critics (see Section 2.3.4). Secondly, Taboada mentions the important role that personal experience plays in these reviews (see Sections 2.34 and 3.6.4, as well as Chapters 4-6). Vásquez's aforementioned work on online reviews, in turn, focuses on aspects that I will also look at throughout this thesis,

namely the way in which users construct expertise online (again, see Section 2.3.4) and how they share digital narratives of personal experience (again, see Section 3.6.4).

As Vásquez maintains, "[t]he primary function of online reviews is to evaluate" (2014a: 22). Thompson and Hunston (2000: 5) define evaluation as "the broad cover term for the expression of the speaker or writer's attitude or stance towards, viewpoint on, or feelings about the entities or propositions that he or she is talking about". Studies that focus on evaluation from a linguistic perspective have been numerous and varied, but one aspect that brings most research on this matter together is how evaluations aim to enlist the support of an audience (see Patrona, 2005). Furthermore, a notion such as evaluation can be approached from different angles, whether it is by focusing on modality (Patrona, 2005; Stubbs, 1996) or the specific stances that people use (Biber, 2006; Conrad and Biber, 2000), for instance. As I argue below, the concept of stance is of particular interest for research that looks at online platforms.

Stance-taking is the 'public act' of taking a point of view (Du Bois, 2007; Myers, 2010) and the fact that it is made public means that taking a particular stance also involves using that opinion "to align with or disalign with someone else" (Myers, 2010: 264). Two of the more common types within research on this matter are epistemic stances, i.e., expressing facts, beliefs or knowledge towards a particular subject, and affective stances, i.e., expressions of feelings, judgements or attitudes towards something (Jaffe, 2009). In addition, stance has been emphasised as a central concept if one seeks to understand the way in which opinions are expressed on digital media. Accordingly, many of these sites are *stance-rich environments*: they encourage production, sharing, discussion, and evaluation of public opinions (Barton & Lee, 2013: 31). Along with the aforementioned epistemic and affective stances, digital communication researchers have analysed stylistic stances, e.g., adverbs such as 'seriously', honestly', etc. (Myers, 2010), as well as smiley faces (Georgalou, 2013; Myers, 2010). Furthermore, there are ways of suggesting stance that go beyond the specific grammatical components of the clause, i.e. discursive devices: reported speech, rhetorical questions, irony, concessions, and conversational devices (Myers, 2010: 108-112), which, as I will show (see Section 4.7), also happens in my data.

As I argue in the next section, message boards constitute a type of platform where online reviews are prevalent. In fact, Henning-Thurau *et al*. (2004: 39) claim that eWOM communication can occur in various platforms, including discussion forums.

With this in mind, I focus on the research that has been done on discussion forums within sociolinguistics and CMC

2.2.4 Sociolinguistics, CMC and discussion forums

Since the 1990s, several sociolinguistic studies have concentrated on discussion forums, a public and asynchronous form of CMC, which "group together topically related threads" (Androutsopoulos, 2007a: 344-345). One of the earliest investigations that covered message boards was Baym's work on soap operas (1995a, 1995b, 1996, 2000). Another example is Androutsopoulos' research on hip-hop culture on message boards (2007a, 2007b), which not only looked at issues such as multilingualism and style, but also specifically argued in favour of more sociolinguistic work on CMC (2007b: 310). Similarly, Kytölä's studies on football web forums (2012a, 2012b, 2013) also dealt with multilingualism, along with other aspects such as peer-normativity and metapragmatic reflexivity. From a quantitative standpoint, Claridge's (2007) study is relevant methodologically in terms of how corpus linguistics can be used to study this kind of platform (see Section 3.6.2), but also due to some of the overall descriptions of message boards that she develops. For her, one of the main aspects of web forums is that their style is conversational in a similar way to email or chat, "but in contrast they are completely public" (2007: 87); not only are posts in forums open to be read by any user, but they might also be available long after they were written. Research on web forums has also focused on politeness (see Section 2.4.5). Some of these studies include Nishimura's (2010) examination of impoliteness on two Japanese bulletin board system-communities and Angouri and Tseliga's (2010) work on impoliteness on Greek forums. In addition, Baym's aforementioned analysis on soap operas concentrated on the way in which online participants manage agreements and disagreements (1996, 2000). Although varied in their scope, an aspect in common that these studies share is the importance that context has when it comes to analysing them as polite or impolite; as noted (see Section 2.1), in this thesis I focus on the ways in which context plays a key role in the discursive construction and negotiation of expert identities.

Even though sociolinguistic research on message boards has covered the aforementioned communities that get together to discuss specific topics (e.g., sports,

music, and even a medium that shares many similarities with film such as television), none of them have truly focused on web forums where members get together to talk about cinema. Bleichenbacher (2012) does include discussions taken from IMDb web forums (see Section 2.2.2,) but he did not really concentrate on them as much as movie dialogues. Thus, although discussions of popular culture online have received scholarly attention and have even been seminal for studies on digital communication (e.g., Baym 1996, 2000), an in-depth study on *film* discussions still seems to be missing, which is what I intend to contribute with this thesis. In other words, my intention is to contribute to an area that has already proven to be fruitful in regards to the connections between language, interaction and popular culture from the perspective of online discussions, but with a focus on an under-represented form of popular culture such as cinema.

An essential issue in this thesis is how the users in the data discuss cinema. As noted, there is a tendency for them to do so by constructing expertise, which is the focus of the next section.

2.3 Constructing an 'expert' identity

As I argued in Chapter 1, this thesis aims to analyse the ways in which people present themselves as experts when they write about cinema. In other words, they construct a certain identity through discourse, which is why it is essential to explore issues that revolve around identity construction. Moreover, the type of discourse they use on these platforms tends to be vernacular, which is another aspect I will concentrate on in this section. Consequently, in Section 2.3.1, I focus on social constructivism as the approach to the study of identity that this thesis incorporates, while Section 2.3.2 explores self-presentation online. In Section 2.3.3, I discuss the notion of vernacular online discourse and, finally, Section 2.3.4 deals with the theoretical work that has been carried out on expertise and its connection to the internet.

2.3.1 A social constructivist approach to identity

One of the central concerns of this thesis is the extent to which users of IMDb, Netflix and HiFi Chile discuss films as people with enough expertise not only to share their knowledge, but also give advice on what to watch and what to avoid. Therefore, they are spaces where there is both a construction and negotiation of their identities (see Benwell & Stokoe, 2006; Bucholtz & Hall, 2005). This process can involve specific strategies: as Goffman (1956) argues in the influential *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, people need to balance the 'expressions' they give and those they give off.[7] The ones that belong to the former are easier to control than the ones that are part of the latter, since the expressions that are given off tend to be nonverbal and arguably unintentional. Thus, Goffman depicts an 'information game' —which basically consists of being careful of what is given and given off— known as *performance*. Goffman's work offers more insights into the notion of identity through the concept of *footing*, which he describes as "the alignment that speaker and hearer take toward each other and toward the content of their talk" (1981: 128). These footings are ever-changing and signalled by the interlocutors themselves, recognising and ratifying at the same time the footing of the co-participants. This concept influenced the social constructivist model of identity, which emphasises that we build our identities through everyday interactions. Therefore, the perception of who we are evolves depending on these exchanges (see Zimmerman & Weider, 1970). Furthermore, the notion of *footing* is connected to that of *participation frameworks*, on which I will focus in Section 4.2.

A key tenet in regards to identity studies comes in the form of the interactionist paradigm, which involves, firstly, a change in the tradition that used to associate identity with the self, where the self constitutes an essence that not only is firmly located as a part of the individual, but which is also separated from experiences and interactions with other people (see De Fina and Georgakopoulou, 2012: 156-159). Scholars such as Giddens (1991) and Bauman (2005) highlight the extent to which postmodern societies are determined by elements —physical and social displacement, fracture, uncertainty, etc.— that challenge this view of the self as something unitary and

[7] Goffman (1956) talks about the 'expressiveness of the individual', which determines his (sic) capacity to give impressions. He then connects this notion of 'expression' with what people communicate about themselves.

continuous, which was prevalent within early studies on identity. Social constructivism, therefore, represented a shift towards a notion of identity that viewed the self as de-essentialized, where the social world is built by human action (Berger and Luckman, 1966). In this way, identity develops in linguistic interaction, that is, it emerges in discourse instead of preceding it, which makes it "an intersubjectively achieved social and cultural phenomenon" (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005: 607).

Another point to consider when it comes to the different identities one person can construct can be seen in Zimmerman's (1998) distinction between discourse, situated and transportable identities. As Zimmerman (1998: 90) maintains, discourse identities refer to the roles participants assume when they interact (current speaker, listener, etc.); situated identities occur when participants follow certain identity sets within particular types of situations, such as emergency phone calls; and, finally, transportable identities "travel with individuals across situations and are potentially relevant in and for any situation and in and for any spate of interaction". When applying these notions to online and offline environments, Page claims that transportable identities contain attributes that travel along different contexts (both online and offline), whereas situated identities "are more contextually bound and restricted" to particular digital media (2012b: 18).

In this thesis, I maintain that the kind of identity that users construct when they discuss films online is a situated identity, one in which the main aspect of who they are is their interest in, and corresponding knowledge of, cinema. Moreover, and echoing Page's (2012b) assertion, these situated identities gain strength in particular contexts within digital platforms, such as ones I analyse in this study.

In this way, being film fans is more important for the purposes of their participation in these communities than elements of their transportable identities, such as their age, gender, location, etc. (see Section 2.4.4). As noted (see Section 2.3.1), this thesis adopts an approach to identity where the self is constructed through everyday interactions. Thus, in the next section, I offer a more in-depth look at how the negotiation of identity has been studied on online platforms.

2.3.2 Self-presentation on the internet

Some of the earlier studies about self-presentation online made strong distinctions between online and offline personalities. For instance, Turkle (1995, 1996) focused on multi-user domains (MUD), where people created new identities as characters from role-playing games such as *Dungeons and Dragons*. However, Hargittai (2007) points out how later work on this subject (e.g., boyd, 2001; Smith & Kollock, 1999) actually argued that who we are offline carries over to they way we behave when we are browsing the web. Thus, these scholars have departed from earlier views of the online and offline dimensions as separate and have emphasised the extent to which they overlap. In this respect, Hargittai argues that the internet might offer some affordances in terms of what side of our personality we want to accentuate, but there are also constraints and elements from our offline lives that play a part in how we present ourselves on digital media (2007: 277). The role that affordances play in digital communication involves different alternatives for users. Tagg (2015: 4) defines affordances as "possibilities which people perceive to be provided by a technology, which may or may not be exploited by individuals, depending on their technical competence, their past experiences of using similar technologies, and their communicative purposes". According to her, the principal affordances that digital technologies provide are "user-generated content, interactivity, networked resources and convergence" (Tagg, 2015: 5). [8] Furthermore, boyd (2011: 46) points out four affordances provided by digital media, which in turn are key in terms of the configuration of networked publics: *persistence* (the automatic storage of online content); *replicability* (the possibility of duplicating online content); *scalability* (the 'great' visibility that content can have in networked publics); and *searchability* (content can be accessed through the 'search' function). Even though these affordances are intrinsically linked to the technological design that each platform offers, Tagg (2015) maintains that digital communication in general is not defined by technology, but by

[8] *User-generated content* refers to the written and visual material that people post online, as opposed to being merely passive members of an audience; *interactivity*, to the behaviours that can be observed on social media sites such as Facebook or Instagram, whose main goal is for users to interact with one another; *networked resources*, to the wide array of semiotic resources that participants can search for, as well as link, such as using translation tools, inserting hyperlinks or embedding live feeds onto a post; and *convergence*, to the interplay between different forms of media, e.g., how people can share an article from a newspaper website on Facebook, Twitter, etc. (see Tagg, 2015: 6-9 for a more detailed discussion).

what people *do* with it, in another example of how current views on CMC have moved away from the technological-determinism that characterised the first wave of studies on this field, which is, as noted (see Section 2.2.1), a perspective to which this thesis aligns.

The importance of concentrating on what people do online with the technology afforded to them is that such a focus involves a *practice approach* (Hanks, 1996; Ortner, 1984) to study language. Aside from being connected to the notion of *community of practice* (see Section 2.4.3), the *practice approach* entails "routine, repeated ways of acting into which speakers are inculcated through education and daily experience" (Hanks, 1996: 12). In other words, it is through *practices* that people accomplish different goals within social settings. When it comes to the practice of presenting the self online, Marwick (2010) identifies a technique called self-branding,[9] which she defines as "the strategic creation of identity to be promoted and sold to others" (p. 231). The inclusion of the verb 'to sell' in this definition can be best understood if we take into account that self-branding is a term that comes from marketing research, where it has been largely celebrated, a very different reaction from the one it has received in sociology, media and cultural studies, where it has been criticised "for encouraging blatant self-commodification" (Marwick, 2010: 309). The internet allows for a very efficient form of self-branding, since people can disclose personal information to a large audience, and it also promotes relationality in the form of the reactions to people's online profiles, homepages, etc. (Marwick, 2010: 313). As Page (2012a: 182) points out, the identity that is constructed through self-branding is a type of product to be consumed by other people, in which interactions are a way to engage with an audience that needs to be developed and maintained.

More specifically, Kytölä (2012a: 117) stresses the extent to which it is "one's nickname rather than one's 'real identity' that becomes the locus of a certain representation, reputation and respect" on discussion forums. Other alternatives that

[9] Marwick (2010) describes two other online self-presentation techniques: micro-celebrity and lifestreaming. I will not explore them further because the users of IMDb, Netlix and HiFi Chile do not seem to fall within the category of micro-celebrities, i.e., participants who see the members of their audience as if they were 'fans' or who covet the attention that is usually given to traditional celebrities (Marwick, 2010: 289). Also, lifestreaming —an ongoing process in which users share several details and moments of their lives— can be seen on platforms that are not part of my data, e.g., Twitter, Facebook, Foursquare, etc. (Marwick, 2010: 363).

help users build a certain identity include profile pictures, avatars, signatures, and other possibilities depending on the website (location, a brief biographical description, etc.).

To sum up, there are different features and ways in which users can present themselves online. In this thesis, I take a practice approach with regard to the ways in which users achieve a particular goal (i.e., the construction and negotiation of expertise) within social settings (i.e., the three sites contained in the data). Furthermore, self-branding is also a fruitful concept for a study that explores certain aspects of these users' identity that are highlighted and promoted to the rest of the members of these platforms. In the case of the reviewers in the data, those features of their selves tend to be related to their knowledge, familiarity, and expertise with respect to particular films (see Section 2.3.4). Another essential element of this construction of an 'expert' identity is related to the vernacular discourse that characterises online platforms, and distinguishes them from professional/institutional domains, which I concentrate on in the next section.

2.3.3 Vernacular discourse online

Traditionally, *vernacular* has been viewed as a form of "speech, thought or expression, usually applied to the 'native' speech of a populace as against the official language" (Burgess, 2006a: 206). In addition, Labov (1966) analysed vernacular as the speech people use when they are least conscious of it and pay little attention to what they are actually saying. One of the expressions of this reality that Labov studied was Black English vernacular, which he treated as an independent, non-standard dialect of English (1972a). Bell (1976: 187-191), drawing on Labov's work, stresses the difficulty of analysing the actual 'vernacular' of people who realise they are being observed, since that enhances their consciousness when they speak. Thus, studying the vernacular from this perspective usually had to do with anthropological investigations on the types of speech used by 'native' populations. A more recent way of looking at vernacularity is "now used to distinguish 'everyday' language from institutional or official modes of expression" (Burgess, 2006a: 206). Even though there are similarities with the more traditional strand of studies about 'vernacular' —an unofficial speech, put against its official or standard counterpart— there is a shift from 'native' populaces to everyday modern life.

Within this change of perspective, Burgess (2006a) follows McLaughlin's (1996) repurposing of the term 'vernacular'. McLaughlin's perception of this concept is, in turn, influenced by Houston Baker's (1984) work on blues, ideology and Afro-American literature from the viewpoint of vernacular theory: McLaughlin takes Baker's conception of 'vernacular' as "the practices of those who lack cultural power and who speak a critical language grounded in local concerns, not the language spoken by academic knowledge-elites" (McLaughlin, 1996: 5-6). Even if these positions may not come from voices with intellectual prestige, McLaughlin emphasises how they can still be considered contributions to the debate at hand (1996: 6). What is more —in a rather similar scenario to the one I intend to analyse in this thesis—, directly after asserting his notion of vernacular, McLaughlin gives the example of a fan writing in a music fanzine, that is, a nonofficial magazine created by the public. He goes on to contemplate how that fan, from a local setting, may be able to adopt a critical standpoint not only about a specific band, but also regarding issues such as the authenticity of artists and economic life within the music industry (1996: 6).

Burgess not only expands on McLaughlin's view of vernacular, but also does it from the perspective of 'vernacular creativity', which she applies to study online formats such as Flickr (2006a, 2006b, 2009) and YouTube (2008, 2011). For her, vernacular creativity "is a productive articulation of consumer practices and knowledges (of, say, television genre codes) with older popular traditions and communicative practices (storytelling, family photography, scrapbooking, collecting)" (2006a: 207). Burgess also uses the concept of 'vernacular literacies', which she describes as literacies that are not just acquired by a type of 'artistic education' or that are limited to cultural capital, but as competences that are developed through everyday experiences, particularly those connected to mass media consumption (2006a: 209). Furthermore, Burgess (2007) points out that the concept of *literacy* itself is one of "the most contested, multivalent and possibly over-used concepts in our repertoire" (p. 85). Despite this contestation and alleged over-use, a generally accepted definition of literacy involves the social practices and conceptions of reading and writing (Street, 1984). This notion is connected to the tradition of New Literacy Studies (Gee, 1991; Street, 1995), which focuses more on literacy as a social practice than on acquiring particular skills. This tradition "entails the recognition of multiple literacies, varying according to time and space, but also contested in relations of power" (Street, 2003: 77). As Koltay (2011) argues, the scope

of modern literacy has broadened and is now connected to the ability of remaining literate in a reality that involves cultural and technological changes (see Cordes, 2009).[10]

Similarly, other studies have directed their focus towards *media literacy*. As happens with *literacy* by itself, it has been acknowledged how *media literacy* can be contentious (Livingstone, 2003; Luke, 1989). Still, Aufderheide (1992) argues that everyone should have the opportunity to become a media literate person, an achievement that involves processes of decoding, evaluating, analysing and producing print and electronic media. For her, the ultimate objective of media literacy is for people to become critically autonomous in relation to all media. With respect to the internet, Jenkins *et al*. (2009: 29) describe 'new media literacies' as a concept that involves "the traditional literacy that evolved with print culture as well as the newer forms of literacy within mass media and digital media". Since the focus of that study is on young people's literacy, they maintain that new media literacies involve research skills (the use of libraries and the web), technical skills (the need to know how to log on, how to use the software, the programs, etc.), and social skills (the importance of interacting instead of focusing on personal expression).

The concept of literacy has also been included in the notion of *vernacular literacy online*. Barton and Lee emphasise that their view of *vernacular* drifts away from the standpoint that refers to local languages (2012: 284). Much like Burgess' aforementioned work, they see online vernacular literacy activities as being rooted in everyday practices and serving everyday purposes (Barton & Lee, 2012, 2013), in contrast to dominant literacies that can be found in disciplines and areas such as religion, education, law and the workplace, that is, institutions that construct and promote specific ways of writing and reading (Barton, 2010: 110-111). Furthermore, Barton and Lee (2013) also propose to revisit the conception of these actions in light of how technology alters people's routines, although they emphasise that these technological transformations are embedded in bigger social changes. Furthermore, Androutsopoulos (2010) puts both perspectives of *vernacularity* side by side: on the one hand, the more classical, that refers to local, nonstandard and informal varieties of

[10] For reasons of space and due to the focus of this thesis, I will not go into the various theoretical discussions regarding literacy, nor will I delve on a full exploration of what New Literacy Studies entail (but see Gee, 1991; Street 1984, 1995).

language and, on the other, vernacular digital literacies, where users —particularly young people from the western world— carry out literacy practices that are rooted in everyday use and draw on vernacular knowledge, as opposed to knowledge that comes from educational or professional institutions. More importantly, he points out that the relationship between these two notions "is that vernacular practices of digital literacy can be a site of vernacular linguistic expression" (2010: 206). These vernacular linguistic expressions online can take the form of emoticons or creative spelling choice and they can also involve the use of multimedia, which allows for interactions that rely on semiotic resources (Androutsopoulos, 2010: 209).

One concept that shares this distinction between professionals and laypeople is that of *vernacular discourse,* in which "there is a class of online discourse that is properly termed "vernacular" because it invokes characteristics that are recognized as distinct from those that are recognized as "institutional"" (Howard, 2008a: 195). The importance of the concept of *vernacular discourse* for my thesis is that it encompasses the aforementioned practices that correspond to everyday people, who are not part of the knowledge-elites (see Howard 2008a, 2008b). Among these practices, Barton and Lee mention the ability to participate and collaborate in online communities, which provides opportunities to interact through writing, as well as to upload videos and images (2012: 284), along with sharing knowledge and even supporting each other (2012: 296). These transformations are palpable in relation to expertise, a dimension in which Barton and Lee observe "a shift in where expertise lies as it moves from being the realm of professionals and becomes more distributed amongst people" (2012: 296). This distinction between professional/institutional knowledge and its vernacular counterpart leads us back to an issue already discussed (see Section 2.2.3), that is, the differences between professional film critics and online reviewers.

As already mentioned in this section, these vernacular expressions do not seem to come from social institutions or formal domains. What is more, schools tend not to value them, especially when they relate to popular culture (Barton & Lee, 2012: 283). Nevertheless, their apparent lack of worth has another side, since "vernacular activities can give access to resources and provide a voice which may otherwise not be heard" (Barton & Lee, 2012: 84). This mostly refers to 'ordinary people' who use online platforms to express their views, not from the perspective of a traditional authority, but from the viewpoint of a lay person. Interestingly, what these lay people post online,

even if they do not constitute traditional figures of authority, could end up having more authority to an extent, especially since "[o]n the internet, discourse spaces emerge where vernacular speech gains legitimacy and vernacular voices may be established as predominant and authoritative" (Androutsopoulos, 2010: 226).

Vernacular discourse is not always seen in opposition to institutional practices. On the contrary, it can be considered hybrid, because this alternate expression to the dominant voices "imagines the institutional as prior to the alternate voice" (Howard, 2008b: 508). In this sense, Howard (2008a: 192) refers to vernacular discourses "as amalgamations of institutional and vernacular expression", a consideration that further suggests that the institutional discourse cannot be seen as completely separated from the vernacular discourse. Still, even if we consider this relationship between institutional and vernacular voices as entirely separate or as hybrid, the importance of vernacular discourse lies in the way in which the internet not only provides an outlet for people to express these views, but also allows the formation of links in an 'interconnected web' (Howard, 2008b: 509).

In light of the above, I argue that vernacular online discourse shares certain features with constructions of expertise online, especially from the perspective of the vernacular voices that use platforms in the form of digital media, which is the focus of the next section.

2.3.4 Expertise online

The abundance of opinions available online can be explained by the fact that everyone with an internet connection can "post online their opinions about virtually any topic" (Vásquez, 2013: 119). Consequently, this means that "anyone with an internet connection and an opinion can claim to be an 'expert'" (Vásquez, 2014a: 188). However, the ability that people have had since the emergence of the internet to voice their opinions on different digital platforms is not always looked on favourably. As discussed in Section 1.1, although Nichols (2017) provides a wide array of reasons as to why expertise has —supposedly— died in our current era (e.g., a customer satisfaction model in Higher Education, broadcast media allegedly turning into 24/7 entertainment machines, etc.), he stresses the extent to which the internet has contributed to a reality

where individuals seemingly prefer to go online and search for knowledge instead of relying on "people with more education and experience" (p. 106). Nichols does acknowledge the convenience of the internet from an academic standpoint, that is, the opportunity to access online journals, for instance, but he concludes that the possibility of arguing from a distance and what he refers to as the "cheapened" sense of equality the internet provides are "corroding trust and respect among all of us, experts and laypeople alike" (2017: 132). In other words, for Nichols, the internet negatively affects both professionals and everyday online users, especially when it comes to the role of expertise.

It is important to add that Nichols' perspective comes from an academic who studies national security affairs. If we shift to the work that has been done on expertise online by digital communications scholars, however, their viewpoint is noticeably less dystopian. As I also maintained in Section 1.1, researchers such as van Nuenen and Varis (2017) emphasise the extent to which constructing expertise can be a *team* effort (Goffman, 1956), whereby people with similar interests often (although not always) help to validate the construction of expertise of a specific travel blogger. In a similar vein, Thurnherr, Rudolf von Rohr and Locher (2016: 458) point out the ways in which people who share stories of their health issues on online platforms "write their expertise or credibility into being" through the process of sharing these narratives with other users.

For Mackiewicz (2010), people who post online reviews "invent expertise when they state or demonstrate that they posses the background knowledge needed to make valid assertions about the product" (p. 413). However, and even though knowledge is indeed essential when it comes to showing expertise, experience is also pivotal within reviews: as Wilson and Sherrell (1993) note, expertise can have a stronger effect than other attributes such as trustworthiness, namely because expertise is easier to assess by looking at years of experience using a particular product. Furthermore, both personal experience *and* emotional content (Taboada, 2011) not only inform online reviews, but also distinguish them from professional reviews (see Section 3.3.6).

In light of the above, this triad of showing knowledge, revealing personal experience, and sharing emotional content will encapsulate the three main elements by which constructions of expertise will be understood in this thesis. Thus, the way in which I understand expertise moves away from the notion of people only showing how much

they know about a particular topic: I approach this concept as one that also involves users talking about their experiences and feelings. As I argue throughout the data analysis, particularly in Chapters 5 and 6, sharing these experiences and emotions not only speaks to the degree of familiarity that users have with a particular film: it also sheds light on how these particular online communities shape instances whereby discussing these personal connections with films is encouraged. As noted (see Section 2.3.1), this discursive construction of expertise also entails a situated identity that users get to display on platforms such as the three sites I analyse in this thesis, where an aspect of who they are (i.e., film enthusiasts) is the main personal element of their lives that brings them together, as well as the starting point for the discussions that can be read on these platforms.

Within constructions of expertise online, there is an explicit and an implicit way of signalling such a trait (Vásquez, 2014a: 71-78). The first category basically consists of users' claims that allude to their own vast knowledge, a statement that —according to both Mackiewicz (2010) and Vásquez (2014a)— tends to appear near the beginning of these reviews. These strategies may include self-definitions that include mentions of being 'a professional' in something or the use of specialised terminology (Vásquez, 2014a: 72-75). As for the implicit construction of expertise, this strategy involves giving clues about the knowledge that the user may intend to project (Vásquez, 2014a: 75-78). In this kind of review, one will not find overt mentions of alleged credentials - this approach is far subtler. Vásquez states that, in the specific case of films, implicit constructions of expertise can be seen in references that convey a somewhat high level of knowledge, such as connections that are made with other works by the same director, actors, a particular soundtrack composer, etc. (2014a: 77-78). This strategy is similar to the one that professional critics use in order to validate their ability to analyse a specific film (Vásquez, 2014a: 77). In this sense, as Vásquez explains, reviewers do not go ahead and claim that they are experts: they do not *tell* it, but they do *show* it through the connections they make (2014a: 78). In fact, none of Vásquez's examples of the explicit approach are from film reviews. On the other hand, there are cases of implicit construction within these evaluations.

Another way in which knowledge about cinema can be accumulated, and thus shown, once again is related to experience (see Langford, 2005; Schatz, 1981). I will concentrate on this aspect in detail in the second analytical chapter of this thesis

(Chapter 5), but it is important to point out that film studies scholars have argued that experience plays a central role when it comes to audiences becoming more familiar with, and knowledgeable of, cinematic genres. In this respect, Langford (2005: 1) describes a 'generic contract of familiarity' by which users, if they have watched another film that belongs to the same genre, will expect to enjoy a similar experience. Likewise, Schatz (1981) discusses a *cumulative process* whereby spectators increasingly start noticing patterns with respect to different genres, which, once again, allow them to *know* what to expect from them.

If we look at studies on constructions of expertise that have not focused on digital platforms, or even on reviews, but on broadcast media such as TV shows, professional experts have been said to repeatedly evaluate the degree to which they are committed to the reliability of the discourse at hand, something that is usually achieved through the use of factual statements and different levels of modality, depending on the type of TV show (Patrona, 2005). Another study that does not concentrate on digital media, or media in general for that matter, is Mondada's (2013) study on interactions between guides and tourists in guided visits and how knowledge is displayed and negotiated in this scenario. By analysing aspects such as *epistemic status* (see Heritage & Lindström, 1998; Pomerantz, 1980) and the aforementioned *epistemic stance* (see Section 2.2.3), Mondada argues that knowledge can be challenged, negotiated and transformed by the participants in an interaction. Furthermore, as I argue in the data analysis (see Section 4.6), epistemic, as well as attitudinal and stylistic, stances shed light on the ways in which knowledge, certainty, attitudes, and style shape the discursive constructions of expertise in the data.

In sum, online users seize 'the distribution or democratization of expertise' (Vásquez, 2014a: 187-188), which empowers these participants not only to give their opinion, but also to recommend in terms of what is good and what is bad about films, hotels, recipes, etc. Nonetheless, the process of presenting the self online also involves the ways in which people negotiate this self-presentation - as Seargeant and Tagg (2014: 5) note, both these ideas (i.e., the presentation of self, on the one hand, and building and maintaining relationships, on the other) are two essential aspects of social media that are of particular relevance in sociolinguistics. Thus, in the next section I discuss the ways in which participation online has been studied, as well as the specific concepts that can play a role within digital interactions.

2.4 Participation online

Several tenets from sociolinguistic research that predate studies on digital platforms have been increasingly applied to the internet: with respect to online interactions, particularly, digital communication scholars have utilised notions such as *participation frameworks* and *alignment*. However, as I argue below, some of them, e.g., alignment, have only started to be incorporated in the past few years and have added new perspectives to the analysis of online interactions. In light of this, what it is that brings people together online will be the focus of the next sections. As I show in the data analysis, concepts such as *community*, *alignment,* and *participation frameworks* play a crucial role in the negotiation of expertise (see Section 5.5), as well as the co-construction of narratives and how certain participation frameworks allow for storytelling practices to emerge (see Section 6.4).

With these considerations in mind, in Section 2.4.1, I explore the concept of *participation frameworks* and its application to digital communication studies. Similarly, Section 2.4.2 looks at the notion of alignment and how it has been used to analyse online platforms. Sections 2.4.3 and 2.4.4 both concentrate on *community*: the former deals with communities of practice and affinity spaces, which may or not be based on digital interactions (see Gee & Hayes, 2011; Johnson, 2001 for more on this distinction), whereas the latter pertains to online communities exclusively. Section 2.4.5 focuses on research on the management of agreements and disagreements online.

2.4.1 Participation frameworks

As Goffman argues in his discussion of participation frameworks, "[w]hen a word is spoken, all those who happen to be in perceptual range of the event will have some sort of participation status relative to it" (1981: 3). More specifically, he states that *participation status* refers to the relation between a specific person and a particular utterance, whereas *participation framework* encompasses all the people who are involved in that moment of speech (Goffman, 1981: 137). In terms of the communicative process itself, Goffman proposes to break down formats of production

and reception, i.e., the various roles of speakers and hearers. For to the former, he divides the notion of the *speaker* into the *animator* ('the sounding box', that is, the individual who utters the message), the *author* (the person that composes or puts together the message that is uttered) and the *principal* (the individual who takes responsibility for the utterance). The process of reception, on the other hand, entails a circle of both ratified (addressed) and unratified (unaddressed) recipients (1981: 226).

Production and reception have, in fact, been of particular interest for researchers who have applied the concept of participation frameworks to digital media. De Fina (2016), for instance, points out how bloggers may post stories as their animators without necessarily being their authors. In turn, if they were not the ones who authored the story in the first place, they may not have to take responsibility for it, thereby not occupying the role of the principal. With respect to production, bloggers may choose specific participants as ratified addresses, but their content ends up being available for everyone who has access to the blog.

The multiplicity of roles that speakers and hearers can have online is also behind Dynel's (2014) participatory framework for the study of YouTube interactions, which involves three levels of communication. The first level pertains to the speakers and hearers in the actual video interaction; the second level contains the sender and recipient of the video; and the third level includes YouTube users who read and post comments. In so doing, Dynel argues that interactions on YouTube are more complex than on broadcast media such as film or television, where viewers are not much more than ratified hearers, dubbed as 'recipients'.

As Georgakopoulou (2016, 2017) points out, interactional approaches to language involving either friendship, solidarity and affiliation, or disaffiliation and hostility in relation to people and their respective opinions, are intrinsically linked to the notion of participation frameworks (Goffman, 1981). When it comes to interacting online, the notion of alignment has not only been approached from different fields, but has —as I maintain in the next section— also remained relatively unexplored within digital communication studies.

2.4.2 Alignment

Studies from the perspective of Conversation Analysis (CA) and discursive psychology have utilised *alignment* as a term for the analysis of relationship building through interactional processes. Georgakopoulou (2016: 179), drawing on the work of Stivers (2008) and Guardiola and Bertrand (2013), notes how conversation analysts have described a feature of alignment that "consists in creating contributions that are lexically, syntactically, grammatically and sequentially similar to previous contributions". An important point to consider in terms of the way in which *alignment* has been applied as a concept within CA is how both *alignment* and *affiliation* have been situated as the two main forms of cooperation when it comes to negotiating knowledge. Stivers, Mondada and Steensing (2011) argue that while *alignment* refers to cooperation on a structural level, *affiliation* constitutes the affective level of cooperation. In other words, *affiliation* necessarily displays empathy and an affective stance towards another individual, whereas aligning with someone else involves "moving the sequence forward, accepting the terms and presuppositions of the first statement" (Stivers, Mondada and Steensing, 2011: 22). As I argue below, *alignment* has been the preferred term for digital communication researchers who have applied this notion to their work, but the forms of alignment that can be found on online environments often include the affective dimension that has been associated with *affiliation* within CA.

As noted (see Section 2.3.1), Goffman defines *footing* as the *alignment* not only between speakers and hearers, but also the content of their talk (1981: 128). Alignment also appears in Graham's (2015: 305) definition of both relationality and friendship. She describes relationality as the way in which people navigate between closeness and distance in specific groups, and adds that the foundation of this concept is the degree to which we align with others, as well as how the construction of that alignment can depend on each context and moment. In addition, Graham examines what the internet, namely platforms such as Facebook, has turned into a rather prominent concept on digital media, i.e., friendship. She argues that friendship occurs when there is alignment between users: being aligned with someone does not automatically mean that we are dealing with friendship, but a certain amount of it will be needed to call that person a friend. In their own research on Facebook, Tagg and Seargeant (2015: 344) emphasise

how the notions of alignment and identity are connected, since identities —both online and offline— are "performed to some extent through the alignments people make with different groups, opinions and cultural issues, and thus an individual's identity must also be understood in relation to the communities with which they align themselves".

Beyond this use of alignment to describe relationality and friendship online, there still seems to be room for it within the study of online interactions. Georgakopoulou (2016, 2017) maintains that the design of social media sites allows for processes of alignment —for instance, having 'followers' and 'friends', as well as using features such as 'like', 'share' or 'retweet'— that have been largely unexplored from the standpoint of this interactional approach.

It is important to add that many studies on relationships mediated by the internet focus on social networking sites, which "incorporate features of earlier technologies (such as personal websites) but recombine them into a new context that supports users' ability to form and maintain a wide network of social connections" (Ellison, Steinfield & Lampe, 2011: 875). In this sense, some of the most influential studies on online friendships have made a connection between these relationships and the concept of social capital (Ellison *et al*., 2007, 2011).[11] These three same scholars also suggest that Facebook affordances reduce certain limitations that students with low self-esteem may encounter, which makes it more possible for them to build relationships online (Steinfield, Ellison & Lampe, 2008).

As I will argue in detail (see Section 2.4.4), the types of communities included in the data have different characteristics to Facebook or social networking sites in general. Consequently, applying concepts such as *participation frameworks* and *alignment* to sites where 'becoming friends' is not necessarily the key goal (i.e., where people do not or, in the case of Netflix, cannot reveal their personal details) seems to be a fruitful analytical avenue.

[11] This idea of gaining something out of certain relationships can be traced to Bourdieu (1986), who elaborated the concept of social capital, and described it as "the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition" (p. 248). Additionally, Putnam (2000) specifies two types of social capital. The first is bonding, which emphasises the advantages of close personal relationships, including emotional help. The second is bridging social capital, where the connections are weaker and more causal, but these links can still provide benefits such as information.

The notion of people getting together to interact on different online platforms is intertwined with the concept of community, as I argue further in Sections 2.4.3 and 2.4.4 below.

2.4.3 Communities of practice and affinity spaces

The use of the concept of *community* within different academic fields has sparked what Kozinets calls a "considerable academic debate regarding the term's appropriateness" (2010: 7).[12] If we follow Baym, for instance, community seems "appropriate for the new social realms emerging through this on-line interaction, capturing a sense of interpersonal connection as well as internal organization" (1998: 35). It is essential, however, for researchers to clearly state how they understand the notion of *community,* since that will impact both their theoretical and analytical decisions (see Angouri, 2015). Indeed, scholars from disciplines such as linguistics, sociology and psychology have provided their own definitions of what a community really entails, but this term "is typically used to refer to a set of people grouped together around shared characteristics" (Angouri, 2015: 324), thereby connoting both cohesion and belonging (see Section 2.4.4 for more details on the different approaches to the notion of communities online).

The sense of belonging to a given community, alluded in the paragraph above, is something that boyd (2008) stresses: drawing on Anderson's (1991) conception of *imagined communities*, which is used to analyse the process of state formation, nations and nationalism, she describes imagined audiences wherein the users themselves negotiate their membership. In other words, this allows for a bottom-up approach to the analysis of online communities, as opposed to one with static and a priori categorisations of what comes along with participating in a given group. In another example of influential research on digital communication, and online communities specifically, Baym's (1995a, 1995b, 2000) aforementioned work (see Section 2.2.4) on a fan bulletin board that discussed soap operas not only proved to be one of the earliest online ethnographies, but also highlighted the advantages of introducing a *practice*

[12] See Kozinets (2010) for a full overview of the notion of online communities and the criticism and support it has received.

approach (see Section 2.3.2). This approach views social groupings as a community of practice (Baym, 2000: 21), a concept elaborated by Lave and Wenger (1991), which involves a group of people who maintain a regular type of interaction, and who share a similar interest or passion (see also Bucholtz, 1999; Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 1992; Wenger, 1998). A more recent definition of community of practice actually includes *both* expertise and knowledge: Wenger, McDermott and Snyder (2002: 4) describe it as "groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis".

The development of this perspective is connected to the social constructionism of late modernity (see Section 2.3.1), namely in terms of how social and cultural activities of everyday life (Berger & Luckman, 1966; Giddens, 1984) influence the reproduction, contestation and creation of human reality (Rampton, 2009). Because of this change, communities of practice appeared as an alternative to the language-based unit of social analysis known as *speech community* (Gumpertz, 1968; Hymes, 1972; Labov, 1972b), which allowed sociolinguists "to demonstrate that many linguistic phenomena previously relegated to the realm of free variation are in fact socially structured" (Bucholtz, 1999: 203). As Georgakopoulou (2007: 10-11) states, one of the main reasons for this shift was the realization within sociolinguistics that people participate in communities that are multiple, overlapping and intersecting. Consequently, the idea of a speech community began to be seen as problematic (see Rampton, 2000). Another factor that helps us to understand this shift is the move from broad notions of society to 'micro-cultures', that is, communities in which people interact regularly and also share linguistic and social practice norms (Georgakopoulou, 2007: 10). Thus, there is also a change from structure or language to the participants and the ways in which they engage in a given project (Hanks, 1996: 221). These shared interests, passions, linguistic and social practice norms are some of the reasons why communities of practice can be "extremely useful for the description of online communities" (Kytölä, 2013: 34).

A concept that arises as a critique to communities of practice is that of *affinity spaces* (Gee, 2004, 2005; Gee & Hayes, 2011). In fact, Gee and Hayes (2011: 21) argue that the notion of community of practice "has been applied to so many different types of communities, some of which are not very "communal", that it has lost its conceptual clarity" (Gee & Hayes, 2011: 21). Gee also points out that the notion of 'membership'

in communities of practice can be problematic since there are different ways of being a member of a community (2005: 214), which could lead to confusions about who belongs to a certain group, who does not, and how far and when these memberships take place (2005: 214-215). Consequently, this view emphasises the notion of *space* of interaction as opposed to the idea of *membership* in a community of practice (2005: 214).

As noted above, it has been argued that affinity spaces is a better-suited concept than community of practice for the "geographically distributed, technologically mediated, and fluidly populated social groupings" of online game fan communities (Gee & Hayes, 2011: 21), but that description may also suit other CMC formats, such as fan fiction sites (Leppänen & Peuronen, 2012). Gee and Hayes emphasise that affinity spaces do not necessarily have to be virtual, even though the internet works well in the creation of these spaces. Moreover, affinity spaces are particularly connected to the encouragement of individual and distributed knowledge among the participants, and to the presence of both tacit and explicit knowledge regarding the topic or subject that brings people together (Gee & Hayes, 2011: 25-28).

Despite this alleged over use, the notion of *community of practice* can still yield interesting insights for this thesis, particularly from the point of view of how different types of membership (e.g., being an Original Poster in the case of IMDb) give way to specific kinds of participation. In this sense, the concept of *membership* need not be problematic: there may, indeed, be different ways of being a member of a particular community, but that is not necessarily something negative in itself; on the contrary, it can allow the researcher to observe different types of participation. Furthermore, for the purposes of this study, the circulation of knowledge and deepening of expertise that *communities of practice* entail make them useful in terms of analysing the specific communities I looked at on IMDb, Netflix LATAM, and HiFi Chile.

There are two other common features of online communities: the ways in which users participate and how they establish relationships with each other. This will be the focus of the next section.

2.4.4 Online communities

In his seminal work on *virtual communities*, Rheingold (1993) pointed out the extent to which webs of personal relationships develop throughout discussions that people have on online platforms over time. The role that people can play on online platforms is pivotal when it comes to the two main approaches to the notion of *community* that Angouri and Sanderson (2016: 2) distinguish. On the one hand, positivist approaches view communities as rather rigid structures, thereby concentrating on 'macro' categories, such as gender, age, ethnicity, etc. On the other hand, constructionist approaches avoid this rigid conception of online communities, focusing instead on a notion of *community* that constitutes a construct, one that emerges and is negotiated among members. Accordingly, the very concept of *membership* is complex, dynamic, and emerges in interaction. As I argued with reference to research on CMC (Section 2.2.1) and identity (Section 2.3.1), this thesis aligns with studies that view concepts such as community as dynamic and emerging in interaction, as opposed to static or rigid.

Even if several studies on online platforms move away from the aforementioned 'macro' categories and take up a constructionist perspective, this does not mean that other types of categories cannot arise from the systematic observation of specific sites. Correll (1995), for instance, undertook one of the earliest analyses of participation in online communities, in which she provided a typology of the four kinds of participants who log into an 'electronic bar': lurkers,[13] newbies, regulars and bashers. As Kozinets (2010) explains, there "is an apparent developmental progression from lurker to newbie to regular, and an oppositional status displayed by the bashers who come from outside the community in order to harass members" (p. 31). De Valck (2005) also identifies four types of participants in her study of a Dutch online food community called SmulWeb: newbies, minglers, devotees and insiders. Newbies do not have strong social ties with the group and their interest in the activity at hand tends to be superficial. Minglers create strong ties with other members of the community, but their interest is also superficial. Devotees experience the inverse situation: their ties with other users are not strong, but their enthusiasm about the subject that brings the group together is high.

[13] This refers to people who read online content, but do not post themselves.

Finally, insiders have both strong social ties with the rest of the community and a deep interest in the matter that unites them.

Another essential aspect with regard to people joining online communities is the kind of activity they may seek to carry out in the first place. Angouri (2015: 323), for instance, stresses how the internet has changed the ways in which "people look for information, share personal experiences, and pursue personal or professional interests", among other possibilities. In terms of how specific interests can drive users to engage with specific communities, Schwämmlein and Wodzicki (2012) follow Prentice, Miller and Lightdale's (1994) distinction of two types of groups: common-bond groups and common-identity groups, although they change these concepts to common-bond communities and common-identity communities (Schwämmlein & Wodzicki, 2012: 387-388). The former involves people who are interested in one another from a social perspective, e.g., social networking sites such as Facebook. Here, the main content is member profiles, with features like chat, contact lists and asynchronous messaging as some of the ways to encourage a communication that is one-to-one and interpersonal, and which focuses on individual topics. The goal that members of this type of community have is to be accepted by specific users, in order for the interaction to move to a personal level.

On the other hand, common-identity communities have to do with members who share similar characteristics (attitudes, interests, values), a common purpose or task (a sports team or a work group) or social categories (nationality, gender, organisations). Here, member profiles are less important than in common-bond communities, although usernames and registration data are included, and the goal is to be accepted by the whole community, so as to be a part of exchanges that are topic-related. In terms of my thesis, Schwämmlein and Wodzicki actually mention the message boards of IMDb as an example of common-identity communities, where "collaborative writing or commenting are intended to support communication from one member to the group as a whole, focusing on a specific topic" (2012: 388-389).

Kozinets points out two other reasons why people join communities. The first of them considers the connection between the individual and the consumption activity he or she engages in or through a specific online community. In this sense, consumption is the particular activity that motivates people to participate: for example, the central activity of a community that revolves around a video game would be gaming (2010: 31). He

adds that the level of importance that users give to this activity will be directly proportional to how much they will want to become relevant members of the community. This is not only a measure of self-identification, "but of identity and interest combined with expertise" (2010: 32).

The second factor is usually interrelated with the first and it concerns the relationships that characterise the online community at hand. As Kozinets states, that depends on the type of website: for instance, the more common social networking sites such as Facebook will function on the assumption that the users who interact are already friends, or at least know each other. On the other hand, virtual worlds such as Second Life put great importance on social relations, albeit with new identities. Thus, these two kinds of formats, to which Kozinets adds gaming sites, include social aspects already 'baked-in' to their platforms (2010: 32), whether they involve people's offline identities or new ones, created specifically for the platform they participate in. Another relevant issue is whom exactly users build relationships with, or at least whom they have in mind when they write a specific post. A key consideration that needs to be taken into account here is that "the rise of social media has seen the need for new terms, such as 'context collapse', and the need to redefine existing notions such as 'audience'" (Page *et al*., 2014: 124). Regarding context collapse, it refers to the way in which CMC "flattens multiple audiences into one" (Marwick and boyd, 2010: 9). As Baym and boyd (2012) note, these audiences may be imagined or visible. The former involves the user's circle of contacts, i.e., the people he or she has in mind when posting something (friends, specific members of the community, etc.). Nevertheless, the actual audience who reads and/or responds might not be the same as whom the author was thinking of while writing the message; thus, the visible audience is formed by participants who make themselves known by writing a comment or responding to someone.

A different concept that entails online interaction and sets context at the forefront is that of *context design,* introduced by Tagg, Seargeant and Brown (2017: 1), which seeks to understand "online communication, and the extent to which users have the agency to shape the social media contexts in which they interact". Drawing on Bell's (1984) notion of *audience design*, as well as research on the interactive construction of context both offline and online (see Tagg *et al*., 2017: 1 for more detail), *context design* represents both a critique and refinement of *context collapse* by shedding light on how participants take into account certain contextual variables when designing what they

post and the ways in which they interact. In addition, the researchers behind this concept argue that, although widely used, *context collapse* is an under-theorised notion (Tagg, Seargeant & Brown, 2017: 1).

A key factor within online communities, particularly those where there is an exchange of opinions, is the ways in which users deal with agreements and disagreements, an issue I will focus on in the next section.

2.4.5 Managing agreements and disagreements: im/politeness online

Within the research that has been done on agreements and disagreements online, Baym's studies on a soap opera message board (1996, 2000), which I already referred to in Section 2.2.4, have been seminal. The importance of her work lies in the fact that she provided arguably the first systematic study of agreements and disagreements in CMC (Baym, 1996: 11). Even though Baym states that there was "general reluctance to voice disagreement" (2000: 116) in her data to avoid jeopardizing friendliness, one of the key aspects of the forum she analysed is that users share interpretations, which are bound to lead to disagreements. The strategy that the participants employ in that case is "to construct disagreements that attend to the ethics of friendliness" (Baym, 2000: 123), e.g. using qualifiers that leave room for the poster in question to be mistaken ('I would think that', 'I may be wrong, but…', 'I actually though that') (Baym, 2000: 124). Additionally, she identifies two very prominent message features of disagreement: elaboration and reasoning. The former presents itself in the sentence form 'I disagree and _____', whereas the latter often appears as 'I disagree because _____" (Baym, 2000: 142). In other cases, but not often, users apologise for disagreeing (2000: 124-125), or —even less frequently— they frame their comments explicitly as non-offensive (2000: 125). Finally, Baym points out yet another way of managing disagreement: the building of affiliation through social alignments. One of the forms in which this can happen is when participants preface a disagreement with a partial agreement: as Baym explains, "[p]artial agreements were generally followed by words such as "but" and "though" or phrases such as "at the same time" that positioned what followed as a disagreement" (2000: 125).

Similarly, building affiliation can be achieved by including the reader through the use of first-person plural pronouns,[14] particularly by constructing a shared perspective through the use of formulaic constructions like 'Let's', e.g., 'let's face it', 'let's be honest', etc.; apologising for disagreeing (the same as in Baym's data); or even asking questions to other reviewers, e.g., 'Does anyone else find this offensive' (Vásquez, 2014a: 104-108).

Some digital environments can thus present what Tagg, Seargeant and Brown (2017: 4) describe as *online conviviality*, that is, "the desire for peaceful coexistence online through negotiating or ignoring difference and avoiding contentious debate". In this sense, it should be noted that in Vásquez's data of online reviews, the verb 'agree' is used more often than 'disagree' (20 times versus 3). What is more, "the preferred linguistic structure for disagreeing typically takes a less direct form (e.g., *Unlike others, contrary to*)" (Vásquez, 2014a: 117). Not only does this allow us to establish another link with Baym's findings, but also, here Vásquez connects the less direct way of expressing disagreement with politeness conventions in English where, following Pomerantz (1984), disagreements are 'dispreferred' as responses to evaluations. This notion, however, clashes with instances on CMC where disagreements are usual, expected, not necessarily negative, and have an impact on relational issues (Angouri and Locher, 2012: 1551). Thus, whether a disagreement is conflictive or not depends on the context, which is why Locher (2010: 4) emphasises the significance of paying attention to the specifics of the online context when it comes to discussing politeness issues. Similarly, Georgakopoulou (2011: 19) stresses the relevance and necessity of contextual approaches within a particular study so as to fully understand online media, and Graham (2008) points out how the distinct aspects of an electronic community help their members to "craft their own politeness strategies and interpret the utterances of others with regard to politeness" (p. 281).

Context is not only relevant when it comes to disagreements, but also to politeness and impoliteness in a more general way. Although im/politeness can be looked at from a myriad of perspectives, I will focus on the importance of contextual factors within this kind of research. Locher and Watts (2005) depart from Brown and Levinson's seminal studies (1978, 1987) by claiming that said work does not really deal with politeness, but

[14] Vásquez (2014a: 105) highlights that "a disproportionate number of *we/us* references can be found in *Netflix* reviews". For her, most of them refer to an 'imagined audience', the concept that was discussed in the last section.

with the mitigation of face-threatening acts in general.[15] Moreover, Locher and Watts stress the extent to which politeness is a discursive concept, which would make it impossible to predict what is polite or impolite because that depends on the actual interaction at hand. This discursive dimension of politeness was proposed by Watts himself (1989, 1992) and later developed by them individually (Locher, 2004; Watts, 2003). Thus, they argue that

> [T]here is little point in maintaining a universal theoretical notion of politeness when there is discursive dispute about what is considered "rude", "impolite", "normal", "appropriate", "politic", "polite" or "over-polite" behavior in the various communities of practice in which these terms are actually used (2005: 16).

In the case of the intent to be impolite on CMC, Graham (2008: 285) emphasises that assigning intent to speakers online is complicated because of "the lack of adequate tools to approximate paralinguistic and non-verbal messages" (Graham, 2008: 285). Moreover, Nishimura (2010) argues that users may not post their reaction to a face-attack. Consequently, she maintains, "[a]s long as the flow of discourse allows other posters to identify and observe the sender's intentional attack directed toward a specific target, impoliteness exists" (p. 35). The writers' intention can then be interpreted based on the actual text, and that —according to Nishimura— seems to suffice in CMC. Despite possible complications such as those, Darics (2010) stresses how politeness research "can give a more comprehensive account of the use of discourse strategies in computer-mediated discourse" (p. 131), especially in terms of looking at interaction in CMC. During the mid 1990s, Herring (1994) carried out allegedly the first attempt to compare "norms of appropriateness with actual computer-mediated behavior" (1994: 278). Even if these written records might not be available in all websites, as Locher states (2010: 3), there are instances where there is little doubt that the norms of appropriateness have been broken.

[15] Goffman defines *face* as "the positive social value a person effectively claims for [her/himself] by the line others assume [s/he] has taken during a particular contact" (1967: 5). Even though much more can be—and has been—said about this concept, for reasons of space I will only add here that *face* is "an image of self delineated in terms of approved social attributes—albeit an image that others may share" (Goffman, 1967: 5) and, considering the possibility of someone's *face* being threatened, the relevance of *face-work*, i.e., "the actions taken by a person to make whatever he [sic] is doing consistent with face […] to counteract "incidents"—that is events whose effective symbolic implications threaten face" (Goffman, 1967: 12).

Some of the more recent explorations of textual participation in social media from different pragmatic perspectives have concentrated on YouTube (Bou-Franch & Garcés-Conejos Blitvich, 2014; Dynel, 2014; Lange, 2014). Two of these studies emphasise the need for new analytical frameworks of social media interactions: one of them proposes a methodology that would properly examine the polylogal and diachronic kind of conflict that can arise online (Bou-Franch & Garcés-Conejos Blitvich, 2014). From the standpoint of im/politeness, Lange (2014) argues that even though ranting, flaming and hating online are often seen as inappropriate forms of interaction, many participants in her data responded with empathy or agreement to users that started a particular rant. Moreover, "[i]t was far more likely for text commenters to ratify or provide commentary to a rant than it was for them to accuse the ranter of inappropriateness" (p. 62).

Overall, most of the studies discussed above point out the importance of context and of focusing on the interactions themselves instead of approaching the data with preconceived notions of which types of exchanges are polite, impolite, etc. Following this line of thought, even instances that could be interpreted as inappropriate out of context may have a less benign tone if they are observed through ethnographically-informed analyses.

2.5 Summary

In this chapter, I have laid out the main theoretical concepts that this thesis incorporates. Firstly, I provided an overview of sociolinguistic and CMC research in terms of its different *waves* since its emergence as a field of study, and I argued that my thesis departs from the main concerns of the first wave, e.g., technological determinism, focus on platforms as opposed to the users, etc. Thus, I maintained that this study aligns with the more contextual approach of the second and third wave, although it does differ from the third wave in that I did not contact the participants to interview them (see Chapter 3). I also discussed the challenges that a phenomenon such as globalization poses for sociolinguistics, as well as how concepts such as *translocality*, *semiotic mobility* and *localization* can be useful for a study that entails communities where there is an interplay between the global and the local, and where cultural artefacts such as those

related to film (e.g., dialogues, genres, titles, etc.) can be recontextualized and appropriated. I discuss these notions further when I look at the ways in which reviewers in the data appropriate Hollywood cinema into their own linguistic repertoires (see Section 5.4.2).

I also explored research done within sociolinguistics and CMC on both reviews and discussion forums. Regarding the former, I highlighted how tenets such as *evaluation* and *stance* play a crucial role within digital media where people share their opinions. With respect to the former, I stressed how there is a gap in terms of research that has looked at forums where people discuss popular culture, which has concentrated on music and television, but has left cinema relatively unexamined. As I shall show (see Chapter 4, specifically Sections 4.6 and 4.7), analysing stances offers rich insights into the ways in which reviewers express their points of view.

Moreover, I have argued in favour of a perspective on identity studies that emphasises how people's sense of selves is shaped through interaction, as opposed to viewing this as a static notion. This conception of identity, I argued, can be seen in several CMC studies that focus on the contextual aspects that help shape particular identities. An element that gains relevance when it comes to how people portray themselves online, i.e., their *self branding*, is the *vernacular* type of discourse that can be found on digital media, one where the voices of laypeople acquire a prominence that they perhaps did not have before the emergence of the internet. This affordance, in turn, gives them the platform to share their opinions as experts on any topic, whether it is explicitly or implicitly. As noted, expertise will be understood in this thesis as the ways in which users show their knowledge, but also in terms of how they share their personal experience and feelings regarding specific films. However, I will offer examples of instances where reviewers depart from this approach by either boasting about their alleged expertise or acknowledging that they are not experts (see Section 5.2). As I will also show (see Chapter 6), narratives constitute one of the scenarios where both personal experience and people sharing feelings constitute prominent occurrences.

Finally, I have discussed the different aspects of participation online that need to be considered when researching online environments. More specifically, I have pinpointed some concepts such as *participation frameworks* and *alignment* that, although already present in digital communication research, are still somewhat unexplored and can offer fruitful insights within this field, in general, and my data, in particular (see Chapters 5

and 6). Furthermore, I have stressed the importance of notions such as *community of practice*, especially in terms of how this framework can shed light on the analysis of online communities, particularly from the standpoint of knowledge and expertise. Finally, I have noted the ways in which the specific contexts of digital platforms can help researchers observe whether they are dealing with *online conviviality, flaming*, politeness, impoliteness, etc.

In the next chapter, I will discuss the methodological aspects of this study.

Chapter 3: DATA AND METHODS

3.1. Introduction

This chapter will start with a description of the three sites. In order to so, I draw on Witten's (2014) structure of data description, because of its focus on the platforms' culture and context, as well as specific details about their social spaces, which she refers to as 'subsites'. The discussion of HiFi Chile's features will also include an overview of language use in Chile, along with the sociolinguistics studies that have been carried out on this country, as well the lack of research on computer-mediated communicative practices of Chileans. I will then apply Herring's classification model of computer-mediated discourse to the three webpages, since it provides an overview of the sites, both in terms of their media and situation factors that characterise them. Finally, I will describe the affordances and constraints that these three sites present in terms of their design, since this has an impact on the ways in which they construct and negotiate their identities online (see Chapter 5 and 6). Afterwards, I will focus on the methodological choices I made to sample, collect and select the data.

The second part of this chapter will concentrate on the mixed-method approach that I adopt in this thesis, which combines drawing on ethnographic principles, small stories research, corpus linguistics, and coding. The discussion will end with the ethical considerations that this thesis entails.

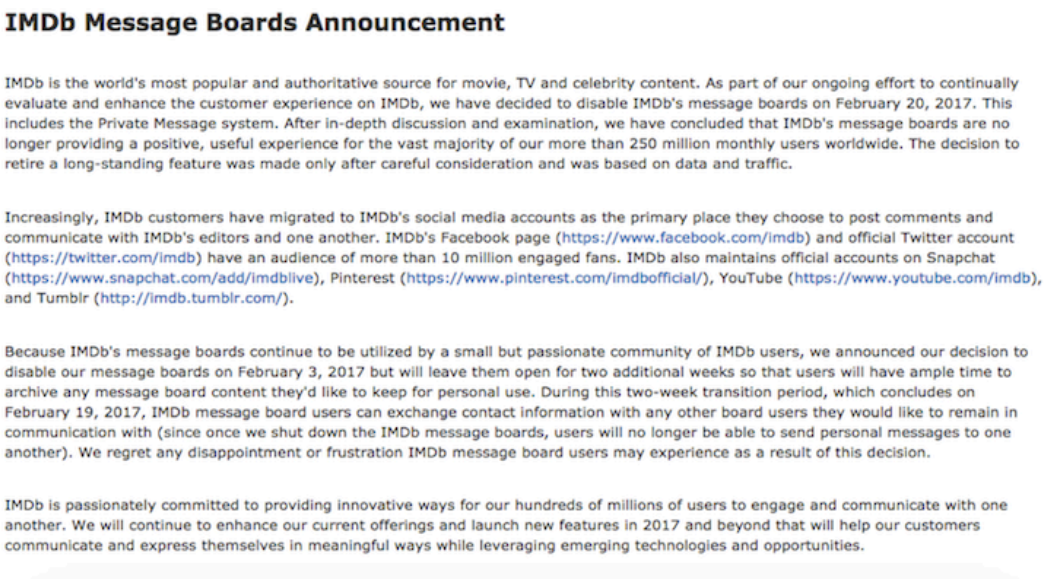
3.2. Data description

In this section, I describe the three sites I studied in this thesis. I use Witten's model (2014) to provide a framework for understanding the platforms' culture, context and subsites (see Section 3.1). Although I will focus on the specific methods later on in this chapter, the ethnographic observations of the data I carried out *even before* the data sampling, collection, and selection inform the sites' descriptions and classifications.

3.2.1 The Internet Movie Database

Before I describe this particular site, it is important to provide information on the state of IMDb's discussion forums at the time of writing. On 3 February, 2017, IMDb announced it would be closing down its discussion forums by 19 February of that same year (see Figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1 IMDb announces it is closing down its discussion forums



IMDb Message Boards Announcement

IMDb is the world's most popular and authoritative source for movie, TV and celebrity content. As part of our ongoing effort to continually evaluate and enhance the customer experience on IMDb, we have decided to disable IMDb's message boards on February 20, 2017. This includes the Private Message system. After in-depth discussion and examination, we have concluded that IMDb's message boards are no longer providing a positive, useful experience for the vast majority of our more than 250 million monthly users worldwide. The decision to retire a long-standing feature was made only after careful consideration and was based on data and traffic.

Increasingly, IMDb customers have migrated to IMDb's social media accounts as the primary place they choose to post comments and communicate with IMDb's editors and one another. IMDb's Facebook page (https://www.facebook.com/imdb) and official Twitter account (https://twitter.com/imdb) have an audience of more than 10 million engaged fans. IMDb also maintains official accounts on Snapchat (https://www.snapchat.com/add/imdblive), Pinterest (https://www.pinterest.com/imdbofficial/), YouTube (https://www.youtube.com/imdb), and Tumblr (http://imdb.tumblr.com/).

Because IMDb's message boards continue to be utilized by a small but passionate community of IMDb users, we announced our decision to disable our message boards on February 3, 2017 but will leave them open for two additional weeks so that users will have ample time to archive any message board content they'd like to keep for personal use. During this two-week transition period, which concludes on February 19, 2017, IMDb message board users can exchange contact information with any other board users they would like to remain in communication with (since once we shut down the IMDb message boards, users will no longer be able to send personal messages to one another). We regret any disappointment or frustration IMDb message board users may experience as a result of this decision.

IMDb is passionately committed to providing innovative ways for our hundreds of millions of users to engage and communicate with one another. We will continue to enhance our current offerings and launch new features in 2017 and beyond that will help our customers communicate and express themselves in meaningful ways while leveraging emerging technologies and opportunities.

Even though this is an occurrence that can always happen with online data due to how ephemeral it can be (Page, 2012b), it might conceivably have affected my data collection and analysis. However, the data collection was conducted more than a year prior to that and the particular discussion thread I focused on would get deleted and then restarted every few weeks (see Section 3.4). In other words, those particular reviews would have been erased even if IMDb had not decided to close the message boards. After realising the importance of saving screenshots of data from IMDb (see Section 3.5), I had already stored the posts I selected from this site, which is why IMDb's decision did not end up affecting my research plan. The announcement by IMDb, on the contrary, actually presented an opportunity: the uproar this decision caused on their Facebook account allowed me to observe several reasons as to why many of these users

preferred the message boards over Facebook or Twitter. Some of these explanations included how scattered the conversations are when compared to forums, the fact that they prefer to keep a certain level of anonymity when they write about films, etc.

Even though the IMDb boards are no longer available, throughout this thesis I will describe them and discuss the findings in the present tense, so as to avoid the potential confusion of referring in the present tense to two sites (Netflix and HiFi Chile) and not the other. This description will start with IMDb's culture and context —including its moderation policies— and then move on to its specific 'subsites'.

3.2.1.1. IMDb — Culture and context

The Internet Movie Database (IMDb) was launched in 1990. As the website's founder and CEO —an English professional computer programmer named Col Needham— explains in a brief history than can be accessed on the same webpage, even though the first online browser was not available until a year later, he published a series of scripts on 17 October, 1990. This information allowed users to search for lists of credits, which were collected by the USENET group 'rec.arts.soaps' (see Chmielewski, 2013 for more details about the history of IMDb). Three years later, a doctoral student at Cardiff University convinced Needham to adapt IMDb to the characteristics of the new World Wide Web.

In 1996, Needham —along with three partners— incorporated IMDb and two weeks later it had already sold its first ad. Only two years from that had passed when Amazon offered to buy IMDb and make it its subsidiary company. This meant that Amazon started using IMDb as an outlet to sell its products —e.g., DVDs, videotapes, etc.—, while Amazon included data from IMDb, in order to give users more information about the movie or TV show they were thinking about buying. Being acquired by this online retailer company gave IMDb the opportunity to redesign the website and to start updating its information on a daily basis instead of weekly. In 2002, the IMDb Pro subscription service was introduced, with professionals of the entertainment industry in mind. In 2009, IMDb was made available to smartphones and, as can be seen in Figure 3.1, its combined web and mobile audience on a monthly basis now surpasses the 250 million people mark.

IMDb has 75 million web registered users. According to Alexa, a webpage that gathers data about internet sites, 31.9% of these participants are from the United States; 6.3%, from India; 6.2%, from the United Kingdom; 3.8% from Japan; 3.6%, from Canada; 3% from China; 2.5% from Germany; 2.4% from Australia; 2% from Sweden; 1.6% from France; 1.5% from Spain; 1.3% from the Netherlands and Norway; 1.2% from South Korea, Turkey, Greece, and Italy; 1.1% from Pakistan, Romania, and Brazil; and 1% from Saudi Arabia, Denmark, and Egypt.[16] No other country constitutes even 1% of participants. Even though the users from the United States represent the highest percentage, we can also observe participants from North America, Europe, Asia, and South America.

Unlike other web forums, moderators on IMDb do not actively search the boards looking for abusive posts, due to the website's size: the procedure, as can be read on the 'Message Boards Top Frequently Asked Questions', is that moderators only look at boards or posts after a member uses the 'Report Abuse' feature. Participants can read the 'Message Boards Terms & Conditions of Use' and the boards content guidelines to make sure that the post they are thinking about reporting actually violates the site's policy. The former states that any content that is harmful, threatening, indecent, defamatory, obscene, lewd or harassing will not be allowed; the latter maintains that unacceptable behaviour includes offensive usernames, profiles or signatures; posting spam; or posting spoilers without announcing them first. In this way, moderators on IMDb do not warn participants repeatedly regarding potential abuses of norms of practice; their role only comes into play when another member denounces an alleged abuse.

As the message boards are no longer active, I cannot provide statistics in terms of the current number of posts on each subsite. I will, however, offer the details that were available when I collected the data.

[16] This is all the information that Alexa.com provides in regards to the users' nationality. IMDb, on the other hand, does not offer any details in this respect.

3.2.1.2 IMDb subsites

IMDb's message boards encompass a wide range of topics, which are divided into the following categories: 'Film Talk', 'TV Talk', 'Shop Talk', 'Trivia! Trivia!', 'Awards Season', 'Genre Zone', 'Around the World', 'Star Talk', 'Music', 'Technology', 'General Boards' and 'IMDb Boards'. The total number of posts as of mid-July 2015 was 1,229,928.

I will now provide more details about the two most popular IMDb's 'subsites': 'IMDb Boards' and 'Film Talk'

3.2.1.3 'IMDb Boards'

This subsite had 267,362 posts as of mid-July 2015. The majority of them come from the subsection *Contributors Help* (163,949), where the site's most active and senior members discuss policy recommendations for IMDb and interact with IMDb Data Editors. There is also 'IMDb Poll' (99,671), in which possible new polls are suggested (and replied to). 'IMDb Information' (2,822), in turn, mostly features updates, suggestions and changes to the message boards in general. In 'IMDb Mobile' (687), members comment, ask questions and complain about the different apps that IMDb offers (for iPhone, Android, etc.). Lastly, in 'IMDb Hit List' (233), users can share links that administrators of IMDb later post through the website's Facebook or Twitter accounts.

3.2.1.4 'Film Talk'

The next largest category of posts, not surprisingly for a webpage called the Internet Movie Database, is 'Film Talk' (170,273 posts as of mid-July 2015). It consists of 15 subsections: *Film General* (110,246 posts); *Internet Films/Videos* (89); *Now Playing and Upcoming Films* (73); *Summer Movies* (228); *Box Office* (7,960); *Film Art and Cinematography* (935); *Film Festivals* (577); *Film History and Meaning* (407); *Video*

(18); *Classic Film* (38,314); *Star Wars* (809); *Cult Films* (276); *Harry Potter* (644); *The Lord of the Rings* (933); *Special and Visual Effects* (821); and *James Bond* (7,943 posts).

The *Film General* subsection includes a thread called 'Which films did you see last week' that is restarted every few weeks (see Section 3.2.1). Here, users exchange recommendations and usually share personal experiences about their film-watching practices. As I will discuss in the next section, there is a very similar thread on HiFi Chile.

3.2.2 HiFi Chile

Even though this section also involves the site's culture and context, as well as its subsites, here I will include an account of language use in Chile, so as to provide a richer background of this country's linguistic characteristics.

3.2.2.1 HiFi Chile — Culture and context

Unlike on IMDb, it is more difficult to find information about HiFi Chile's history or its main features on its website. There are, however, some key details available: the web forum was first launched on August 19, 2010 by a group of people, who are still identified in their profiles as founding members.

The moderation practices on HiFi Chile do not seem to be very strict. As opposed to what happens on IMDb, moderators tend to actively participate in discussions about sound technology, film, TV, etc. as any other user does. Therefore, their role is not reduced to deleting posts or warning other members about the content of their entries. In fact, there are rarely any instances in which moderators actually fulfil either of these duties.

3.2.2.2 HiFi Chile subsites

HiFi Chile is divided into different categories, such as 'Comunidad' ('Community'), 'Stereo', 'Hometheater y Multicanal' ('Hometheater and Multichannel'), 'Música' ('Music'), 'Cine y TV' ('Film and TV'), 'Otras Adicciones' ('Other Addictions'), 'Clasificados' ('Classified Ads') and 'Sociales' ('Social').

As can be guessed from the website's title, HiFi Chile was first launched as a web forum for people to discuss —and sometimes sell— sound technology equipment, e.g., speakers, headphones, vinyl, amplifiers, etc. Indeed, if one looks at some of its categories, such as 'Stereo' or 'Hometheater and Multichannel', sound technology still plays a predominant part in the interactions that can be found on this message board. Nonetheless, as I also mentioned, there are other topics that are actively discussed, and film is one of them. In terms of numbers, the overall statistics that the website itself provides state that there were a total of 296,007 posts on HiFi Chile, and 6,740 members as of mid-July 2015. More specifically, the 'Film and TV' category had close to 13,000 posts. This is noticeably less than IMDb, but I would not consider that surprising if we take into account that the latter is a website that gathers people from all over the world, which does not seem to be the case with HiFi Chile, at least not in terms of the people who actually post there.

In a similar manner to the above section on IMDb, I will focus on HiFi Chile's subsite 'Cine y TV (Film and TV)'. Once again, due to the focus of this thesis, I will concentrate on the forum that involves films.

3.2.2.3 'Cine y TV (Film and TV)'

'Film and TV' has had three subsections since late August 2010: *Estrenos* (Premieres, 969 posts); *Películas* (Films, 10,324), and *Series y programas de TV* (TV Shows and Programmes, 1,692). On the *Films* subsection, one can find the thread '¿Qué películas viste recientemente?' (*Which films did you watch recently*?), which had close to 6,000 posts as of mid-July 2015 and was started in late August 2010. As noted above, it has essentially the same function as 'Which films did you see last week' on IMDb.

3.2.2.4. Language use in Chile and CMC studies

Describing the linguistic reality of every country that is represented on IMDb or Netflix LATAM would be impractical, but such an account can be provided for the one country that is prominent on at least two of these webpages (HiFi Chile and Netflix LATAM).

The *de facto* national language of Chile is Spanish, although some indigenous minority languages are also spoken across the territory, such as Aymara, Huilliche, Kunza, Mapudungun, Qawaskar, Quechua, Rapa Nui, and Yamana (Lewis, 2009). The immigrant languages spoken include Catalan, Croatian, English, Hunsrik, Italian, Standard German and Vlax Romani (Lews, 2009). Among the foreign languages that are taught in Chile, there is a clear dominance of English; as a matter of fact, it is the only foreign language that the Chilean Government included in its Fundamental Objectives and Minimum Mandatory Content (Objetivos Fundamentales y Contenidos Mínimos Obligatorios) for education in 2009 (UNESCO, 2010). However, Chile is still far from the bilingual reality of countries such as Finland (González & González, 2004). For instance, a study conducted in 2013 that measured English proficiency placed Chile 44th out of 60 nations (La Tercera, 2013). The segment in which the country fell into was one in which most people were only thought to be able to deliver basic information about themselves and their environment, using simple terms to do so. Accordingly, most of the reviewers on HiFi Chile post exclusively in Spanish, a pattern that is better understood if we consider that, although past governments have emphasised the importance of teaching English, the lack of progress in this matter seems to be noticeable in terms of the scarce amount of code-switching or multilingualism on this site.

With respect to sociolinguistic studies done in or about Chile, some of the recent research has dealt with issues such as attitudes towards dialect variation (Blas Arroyo, 1999), narrative and children (Jiménez, 2006), narrative and young people (Guerrero, 2011a, 2011b), common use of informal lexicon (San Martín, 2005) or, more ambitiously, the reported speech use in its capital, Santiago, from a sociolinguistic point of view (San Martín & Guerrero, 2013). Another strand, perhaps more traditional, has dedicated its efforts to the study of native tongues —particularly *Mapudungun*— and how the use of Spanish can coexist with them in an educational environment

(Hernández & Ramos, 1983, 1998). Interestingly, the only study I encountered that concentrates on the sociolinguistics of CMC with a focus on popular culture was not carried out by a Chilean, but by a German scholar named Uta Helfrich (2014), who looked at an audio clip that was uploaded on YouTube of a Chilean radio show called *El chacotero sentimental* (which could be translated to something along the lines of 'The Sentimental Jokester'). More specifically, she analysed instances of attacks in these comments and concluded that, on platforms such as YouTube, aggressiveness is not always intended to offend the other users and can even be seen as entertaining by the community in question. While Chilean media and communication scholars have focused on different features of CMC, none of them —to my knowledge— have done so with an emphasis on sociolinguistics. Thus, language use by Chilean users has not only seemingly been overlooked by digital communication researchers in general, but also by Chilean scholars themselves, which suggests that looking at a platform such as HiFi Chile can contribute to studies in this field. In addition, as I explain in the next section, Netflix LATAM not only provides an opportunity to look at reviews written by Chileans as well, but also by Latin Americans at large.

3.2.3 Netflix

In a similar manner to the description of the two previous sites, I will first address Netflix Latin America's culture and context and then its subsites. Furthermore, since Netflix Latin America has the same features as the original Netflix US, I will mostly refer to 'Netflix' overall, with a particular emphasis on Netflix LATAM when necessary.

3.2.3.1 Netflix — Culture and context

Launched in 1997, this internet subscription service for film and TV streaming had, by the first quarter of 2015, more than 62 million subscribers around the world. By mid-2017, this number had risen to 103 million subscribers. Netflix was founded by Marc Randolph and Reed Hastings, its current CEO. From September 1999, it offered video

rentals for a monthly fee, but that only lasted a few months. The new model that was adopted afterwards eliminated aspects such as due dates or fees for late returns and concentrated on video-on-demand. In 2007, the company introduced its streaming service, which allowed members to instantly watch films and TV shows on their personal computers. In 2013, the first TV show developed by Netflix, *House of Cards*, premiered. Unlike network and cable programmes, *House of Cards'* first series was immediately available in its entirety, which broke the tradition of weekly instalments that had been the standard for decades.

Netflix is available in nearly 200 countries, including the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, France, Germany, Belgium, Austria, Egypt, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Finland, Switzerland, Greece, Jamaica, New Zealand, Australia, Israel, Ghana, the Netherlands, Italy, Luxembourg, the Caribbean, Central America, and Latin America. In regards to this last region, the countries covered include Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela.

As Vásquez (2014a: 12) states, there is no clarity in terms of when the company added its 'rate and review' option. At first, reviewers were able to have a profile and also customise it by adding a photo and information about themselves. Nevertheless, this was later changed and now all reviews on Netflix are anonymous: they do not include any kind of personal information such as username, amount of reviews posted, demographics, etc. One feature that is available for Netflix users is the option to indicate whether they found other reviews 'helpful', 'not helpful', or 'inappropriate', and they could also assign a rating to what they watched from 1 to 5 stars. [17] As I argue in the data analysis (see Section 5.5), instances in which participants deem other reviews as 'helpful' can be compared to the 'like' button on Facebook, whereby members align with specific posts. Moreover, moderators do not monitor reviews frequently, although it is specified on the webpage that these posts should not contain offensive language, or content that could be illegal, obscene or threatening. Reviewers are also warned not to disclose personal information such as phone numbers or email addresses, and they should not write personal attacks directed to the people involved in the films they are reviewing. Finally, users are told not to post any form of criticism

[17] This was replaced in April 2017 by giving films or TV shows either a thumb up or a thumb down, which basically translates to liking or disliking the content at hand.

towards Netflix's policies or services. If the moderators do find a review with any of these characteristics, they are deleted immediately.

Netflix does not provide information about the total number of reviews written or the countries from which each user comes from. Moreover, the number of posts for each film or TV show can vary, which makes it even harder to speculate about a potential total.

3.2.3.2 Netflix subsites

More than actual subsites, with their own features or discussion topics, Netflix is organised through categories that have to do either with the films' genre or with the users' preferences. Examples of the former include 'Comedy', 'Foreign Films', 'Dramas', etc., while the latter can be seen in categories such as 'My List' (the films that users marks for future viewings) or 'Top Picks', which are suggestions based on the content that members have already watched. Among these subsites, 'Recently added' includes the latest additions to the website. As I already argued, Netflix LATAM has the same categories, the only difference is that their names are in Spanish.

In the next section, I apply Herring's (2007) faceted-classification scheme to describe the three sites from the point of view of their medium and situation factors. By doing so, I explore the different aspects of the sites from the perspective of their technical characteristics and how users utilise the platforms, as well as the ways in which they relate to one another.

3.2.4 Medium and situation factors

Herring (2007) proposes a classification model of computer-mediated discourse (CMD, cf. Herring 1996a, 2011), based on categories or 'facets'. The purpose of this approach is to cover elements related to context that might influence the way in which discourse is used in CMC platforms, thus bringing them to the attention of the researcher. Herring's approach is based on studies by scholars such as Hymes (1974) and Baym (1995a, 1995b), and argues that CMD is determined by two factors: medium (the

technological dimension) and situation (the social context). Furthermore, she states that there is no hierarchical relationship between the two, and that the strength of their influences is discovered through empirical analysis.

In order to employ this classification model, I will apply it to the data in a table, and then I will describe it further. I arrived at these classifications (e.g., the purpose of the sites, their tone, etc.) through the observations of the sites I carried out before the data collection.

Table 3.1 Facets of situation for the three sites

Facets of situation	**The Internet Movie Database (IMDb)**	**HiFi Chile**	**Netflix**
Purpose	Informative and social	Informative and social	Mostly informative, although users find ways to engage with others
Theme	Mostly film and TV (but also music, technology, etc.)	Sound technology, but also film, TV, music, etc.	Film and TV
Tone	Informative, casual, playful, intellectual, contentious, friendly, cooperative, sarcastic	Informative, casual, playful, intellectual, friendly, cooperative	Informative, casual, playful, intellectual
Community visibility	Public	Public	Bounded
Participant visibility	Anonymity at the participant's discretion	Anonymity at the participant's discretion	Anonymity
Participation structure	Messages are always one-to-many	Messages are always one-to-many	Messages are always one-to-many
Participant characteristics	Users rarely share details about their gender, age, etc.	Users rarely share details about their gender, age, etc.	Users rarely share details about their gender, age, etc.

Table 3.2 Facets of medium for the three sites

Facets of medium	The Internet Movie Database (IMDb)	HiFi Chile	Netflix
Synchronicity	Asynchronous	Asynchronous	Asynchronous
Persistence of transcript	Persistent	Persistent	Persistent
Channels of communication	Dominated by text	Dominated by text	Dominated by text
Anonymous messaging	Yes	Yes	Yes
Private messaging	Yes	Yes	No
Quoting	Automatic	Automatic	Manual
Message format	New messages are added to the bottom of the list	New messages are added to the bottom of the list	Variable

Facets of situation

Purpose: While the main purpose of IMDb and HiFi Chile seems to be equally informative and social, in the case of Netflix the former is more salient, although —as I argue in Section 3.2.5— users find ways to interact with others. Participants from all three websites share their evaluations of films and make them available for the rest, thus combining informative and social activities.

Theme: The overarching themes on both IMDb and Netflix are film and TV, although IMDb's message boards include many other topics (see Section 3.2.1.2). HiFi Chile started as a website dedicated to sound technology (see Section 3.2.2.1), but it also involves active discussions about film, TV, music, photography, etc.

Tone: Perhaps due to its size, IMDb is —out of the three sites— the one that presents a greater variety of tones. On the smaller HiFi Chile, features such as friendliness and cooperation are more salient, while the less interactive Netflix shows more instances of

casual/playful posts than sarcastic/contentious. I will, however, focus on this in more detail when I discuss my coding scheme (see Section 3.6.3).

Community visibility: Both IMDb and HiFi Chile are public: anyone with an internet connection can read the messages posted on them. Netflix users need to pay a monthly fee in order to have access to the streaming content and read and write reviews, which makes it a more closed community.

Participant visibility: On IMDb and HiFi Chile, some metadata cannot be hidden from the site, such as username, a profile picture, and either join date (for IMDb) or the number of posts one has written (for HiFi Chile). There are also metadata that is at the discretion of the participants, e.g., their real name, birth date, location, gender, occupation, etc. On Netflix, as has been stated, everything is anonymous.

Participation structure: Messages are one-to-many on the three sites, since all posts are made by one individual for the rest to read.

Participant characteristics: Participants of IMDb and Netflix do not tend to share much information about their gender, age, occupation, etc. Although HiFi Chile users do tend to talk about their significant others (often female) and/or their children and how they may have joined them while watching the film or suggested/imposed it, in several cases it is difficult to know with certainty whether they are male or female, young or old, etc.

Facets of medium

Synchronicity: Messages on IMDb, HiFi Chile and Netflix are asynchronous, i.e., they are stored until they can be read and there is no need to be logged in at the same time as the user who wrote them in order to read them.

Persistence of transcript: Posts on IMDb, HiFi Chile and Netflix are kept indefinitely on the sites (although some threads from IMDb can be restarted).

Channels of communication: All three sites are primarily text-based, although members can use features such as acronyms, emoticons, and the repetition of punctuation marks to convey emotions. Like in the case of *tone*, I will delve further into this when I describe my coding scheme (Section 3.6.3).

Anonymous messaging: Members of IMDb and HiFi Chile can choose to disclose personal information or not, whereas Netflix users, as has been said, post their reviews in a completely anonymous manner.

Private messaging: IMDb and HiFi Chile offer the option of sending private messages to other participants, whereas Netflix does not.

Quoting: There is a built-in quoting feature on IMDb and HiFi Chile. Conversely, if a Netflix user wants to quote another participant's post, he or she would have to copy and paste it into the new review. As I will argue (see Section 5.5), by quoting other users, participants either align or misalign with the reviews that are shared.

Message format: New messages are shown at the top of the list on IMDb and HiFi Chile, while on Netflix the first kind of reviews that appear are those which were considered more useful by other members and, after them, the most recent posts.

In the next section, I discuss the sites' affordances and constraints.

3.2.5 Affordances and constraints

At least two of the sites —IMDb and HiFi Chile— present several similarities in terms of layout, since, on both, users can create their own profiles, with corresponding usernames, profile pictures, etc. On the other hand, and as noted, on Netflix users remain completely anonymous. These privacy settings would suggest that Netflix is the more limited site when it comes to users engaging with one another; even though that is true to an extent, Netflix also provides participatory alternatives that the other two sites do not offer, which I will note below.

If we look at the affordances (see Section 2.3.2 for a definition of this concept) that these platforms present, one of the most prominent for IMDb and HiFi Chile is quoting, i.e., the ability to directly engage with other reviewers by replicating the entirety or a portion of the other reviewer's post and then adding their own thoughts. Even though IMDb users can indeed employ this option, they do it less often in the data than HiFi Chile participants. This happens partly because IMDb reviewers have another alternative: when they reply to another member, the post moves a few millimetres to the right. If someone else joins that particular conversation, that post moves even more to

the right, thus signalling that an interaction is taking place. Additionally, some individuals, instead of using the 'quoting' tool, just repeat what another one wrote and add it into their own post without using the actual quoting tool. Netflix offers their participants the chance to give a thumb up or down to films, and, as noted (see Section 3.2.4) also to state whether they thought a particular review was useful or not.

IMDb and HiFi Chile also present very similar constraints: aside from quoting, they do not have the affordances that more recent sites do, e.g., 'tagging' someone or 'liking' a post, 'retweeting' something, 'sharing' other people's posts, etc. In the case of Netflix, the limitations stem from its completely anonymous settings, as well as the absence of tools such as quoting other participants. Furthermore, HiFi Chile and IMDb users can add links, pictures and videos to their posts. On Netflix, on the other hand, this is not possible.

The issue of participants using tools in order to interact gains significance when we take into account the role of the Original Poster (OP). The discussion thread on HiFi Chile is the same one that began in 2010, and there are no users noticeably in charge of moderating the discussion (see Section 3.2.3). In the case of Netflix, although participants may refer to other users' opinions, the design of the platform does not encourage textual interactions (e.g., there is no 'reply' or 'quote' button), therefore there is no moderator or someone in charge of keeping the conversation going either. When it comes to IMDb, however, we encounter the role of the OP. As I will expand on in Section 3.4, the specific discussion thread I analysed gets restarted after a few weeks, and each time this happens, a new user takes in the role of OP. The task of the OP is to start the discussion of that week by posting an initial post, hence the name 'Original Poster', and then open up the conversation to the rest of the participants by asking them which films they have seen. Once the other members start replying, the OP is responsible for responding to as many he/she can (although some posts are left without a reply) and for stating what he/she thought of the films that the rest of the participants evaluate. The OP, then, can shape the discussion depending on how he/she engages with other members. Some OPs, for instance, opt to respond to their peers with stories about their film-watching experiences (see Section 6.4).

In Sections 3.3, 3.4 and 3.5, I describe the data sampling, and its collection and selection. Before doing so, it is important to once again point out that the systematic observations of the sites I carried out by drawing on ethnographic principles were

essential in terms of sampling, collecting, and selecting the data, especially if we take into account the variety of discussions that can be found on each platform.

3.3 Data sampling

Herring (2004: 350-352) identifies the following types of data samples: random sampling, sampling by theme, by time, by phenomenon, by individual or members of a group, and by convenience. The last of these alternatives refers to what happens to be accessible to the researcher at a particular point in time. However, as Page *et al*. (2014: 91) have pointed out, it is quite common for digital communication researchers to have more data at their disposal than what they will be able to analyse due to reasons related to time and space. Considering that this was also my case, sampling by convenience would not have been an option for me.

Moving to the other possibilities, I am not looking exclusively at a particular phenomenon (e.g., negotiation of conflict, instances of joking), nor am I concentrating on individual users or demographic groups (e.g., age, gender, etc.). In regards to random sampling, Herring (2004: 351) maintains that it takes place when "each message is selected or not by a coin toss" and while it does include representativeness and generalizability as its possible advantages, it may also involve limitations such as the loss of context and coherence. In this sense, and as I will argue below, messages from the data where not selected using a randomization system.

With respect to sampling by theme, Herring (2004: 351) offers the example of all the messages in a particular conversation, which provides topical coherence, but excludes other activities that happen simultaneously. Similarly, Page *et al*. (2014: 93) identify this alternative as 'sampling by topic' and actually give the example of movies as a potential topical possibility. In the case of my data, however, 'movies' is not specific enough as a topic for sampling, as there are several specific discussions about cinema on each site. As I explain in Section 3.4, I chose to concentrate on discussions on the three websites about films that the users had seen recently seen.

Finally, sampling by time, i.e., choosing a particular interval (Herring, 2004: 351) was also employed, especially since there was a practical problem with solely sampling by topic: even after concentrating only on movies that the participants had recently

watched, some of these conversations began years ago. Consequently, a narrower time frame needed to be established, something that will also be further explored in Section 3.4. Furthermore, as Herring (2004) states, the notions of time and topic within data sampling are usually intertwined: "[i]f a long enough continuous time period is captured, the sample will most likely include coherent threads, thereby incorporating the advantages of thematic sampling as well" (p. 351).

3.4. Data collection

In terms of topic, there is a particular area of both IMDb and HiFi Chile where uses discuss the films they have recently seen. In the case of IMDb, it is 'Which films did you see last week', which is located on the *Film General* section of the website's message boards. Likewise, HiFi Chile includes a thread called '*¿Qué películas viste recientemente*?', which translates as 'Which films have you seen recently?'. While 'Which films did you see last week' is restarted every few weeks, with members alternating as moderators of the discussion, the posts on '*¿Qué películas viste recientemente*?' can be traced back to August 2010.

Considering that the title of both threads alludes to films that members have watched either in the past week or recently, many of the movies that are discussed —although certainly not all of them— are new or at least fairly current releases. It was with this similarity in mind that the particular section of Netflix LATAM I decided to focus on was '*Nuevos lanzamientos'* (New releases), instead of others that pertain to particular genres, e.g., 'Comedy', 'Documentaries', etc., or to what other users are watching, e.g., 'Tendencies'.[18]

As I mentioned above, sampling by time was also employed for the data collection. The first decision that was taken in this regard was to exclude the posts I had read in my preliminary observations, that is, those I carried out before my upgrade interview, which took place in July 2015. The rationale behind starting the data collection right after that

[18] Netflix does include a 'Recently added' section as well as the aforementioned 'New releases'. The former, however, pertains to material that has been included on Netflix's catalogue during the last days/weeks, which does not necessarily mean that it is 'new'. To illustrate this point: by January 2016, two of the films that could be found on the 'Recently added' category were *Fight Club*, from 1999, and *L.A. Confidential*, from 1997.

moment was that, from an ethnographic perspective, this would allow me to enter the sites with an idea of their features, but —at the same time— with an open mind regarding aspects of the data that I may not have foreseen (Yang, 2003). Moreover, July is also the month where Hollywood begins releasing its summer *blockbusters*, i.e., films with massive budgets, which usually belong to the action genre. As I will argue in the data analysis (see Section 5.4.2), reviewers tend to adopt a pejorative stance towards Hollywood cinema, and the United States in general, which is why the moment of the year when summer *blockbusters* from Hollywood are beginning to be released seemed like a good time to observe the reactions that these films trigger in the reviewers. With regard to the finishing point of said interval, my preliminary observations proved to be useful once again: during the six month-period prior to the data collection (January-June), close to 600 posts were written in the thread 'Qué películas viste recientemente?' on HiFi Chile, i.e., the 'smallest' site in the data in terms of it being more local than the other two. Therefore, a similar number could be generated during the subsequent semester. Additionally, my reasoning was that gathering that quantity of posts would not be a problem on the other two "bigger" sites, i.e., which gather either people from all over the world or from Latin America, which would result in a total of 1,800 posts for the analysis.

It is worth noting, with respect to my own positionality as a researcher vis-à-vis these sites, that I have rarely posted on IMDb message boards, and never on the 'Which films did you see last week' discussion. I also posted once on '*¿Qué películas viste recientemente*?' on HiFi Chile in 2014, that is, a year before I collected the data, and then basically became a 'lurker' (see Section 2.4.4). Finally, I have never posted a review on Netflix Latin America, although I have given stars to certain films. In light of my lack of participation on these sites, I did not include any of my own posts in the data collection and limited myself to systematically observing the posts and interactions produced by other individuals.

3.5 Data selection

Aside from the advantages already stated, choosing a specific time period is one of the data selection alternatives that Page *et al*. (2014: 92-93) recommend so as to avoid

accusations of 'cherry-picking', i.e., selecting only data that supports the researcher's argument. In this sense, my goal was to examine these posts from a qualitative perspective, but also through corpus linguistics. My intention then was to build a corpus of these 1,800 posts, analysing their patterns both quantitatively (through corpus linguistics) and qualitatively (through coding), as well as zooming into them from a qualitative standpoint (by drawing on ethnographic principles and narrative analysis).

Table 3.3 Data selection dates

Site	**Period of data collection**
HiFi Chile	July-late December 2015
Netflix LATAM	July-early December 2015
IMDb	November-December 2015

As Table 3.3 shows, I carried out the data collection during the second half of 2015.

For HiFi Chile, the first 600 posts within the aforementioned timeframe were gathered between mid-July and late December.

In the case of Netflix LATAM, the 600 posts were gathered between the same start date and early December. One of the reasons why this did not happen earlier was that several productions that were included in the 'New releases' section were TV shows and not films. This meant that they were not part of the focus of this thesis and thus I had to wait for new material to be included in order to compile 600 posts. Ultimately, I ended up collecting reviews from 17 films that became available on the 'New releases' section, which include productions from the US, Spain, Chile, Mexico and the UK.

Collecting data on IMDb presented a difficulty that came to light during the process: even though I had screenshots of *some* of the data since July, I realised in November that the weekly instalments of the 'Which films have you seen recently?' thread end up getting deleted, as opposed to being stored somewhere amongst all the rest of the posts without recent activity. This presented the problem of no longer allowing me access to

all the posts for every one of those weeks. However, since I noticed this during the data collection process and not after it, I took the precaution of saving screenshots for every post of the thread between mid November and mid December, the period in which I gathered 600 posts. These entries involve the weekly discussions of 'Which films have you seen recently?' in their entirety, that is, the opening post and the rest of the reviews and replies to these evaluations. Another aspect that helped me to collect the intended amount of data even after the described setback occurred was the frequency of posts on this particular topic: I was able to compile this amount of entries in just one month, as opposed to the sixth months it took for HiFi Chile. This complication did not mean that the posts from IMDb that I did manage to save before November lost their value. I added 22 of these entries to the coding process, which meant that while the corpus for the corpus linguistic analysis contains 1,800 posts, the coding involved 1,822 posts, that is, including the 22 posts that I saved before IMDb deleted these discussions.

3.6 Methods

To analyse these sites, I use a mixed-method approach that comprises the application of ethnographic principles, small stories research, corpus linguistics, and coding. As mentioned in sections 3.2 to 3.5, the ethnographic observations I carried out before the actual analysis were pivotal when it came to describing the sites and classifying them, as well as sampling, collecting, and selecting the data. It was through these observations of the data that I was able to establish comparisons between the sites, such as the fact that both IMDb and HiFi Chile involved similar communities in terms of the specific cinema issues they discussed, i.e., the films they had watched the previous week/recently. In terms of analysis, I applied all four methods, with specific combinations (see Section 1.4). It is worth mentioning at this point that, as Page (2018) argues, there is an increasing recognition of how corpus approaches can inform discourse analytic studies of online data. In fact, she specifies that these corpus-assisted approaches can offer insights into the types of stories told on digital media by pinpointing findings through a top-down approach to the contextual analysis of storytelling. In the case of this thesis, the findings that the corpus approach yielded shed light not only on certain keywords that are used to tell stories (see Section 4.4), but also

on other keywords and multi-keywords that I will analyse further from a qualitative perspective. Thus, I follow Vásquez's (2014a: 21) discourse analytical approach to the research of online reviews, which draws on different methodological perspectives (e.g., corpus linguistics, narrative analysis, etc.), depending on the specific issue (a chapter, for instance) that is being analysed within a particular study.

3.6.1 Digital ethnography

For Geertz (1973: 6), ethnography is more than just the 'textbook' point of view (e.g., establishing a rapport with the participants, selecting them, keeping a diary, etc.): what actually defines ethnography is an intellectual effort, an elaborate venture in a "thick description" of the reality that has been observed by the researcher. As Blommaert and Dong (2010: 6) point out, ethnography has its origins in anthropology, which means that "[t]hese anthropological roots provide a specific direction to ethnography, one that situates language deeply and inextricably in social life and offers a particular and distinct ontology and epistemology to ethnography" (Blommaert and Dong, 2010: 7).[19]

One of the most influential scholars to have carried out ethnographic studies of language is Dell Hymes (1974, 1996). In his work, he emphasised the difficulty of defining in simple terms what makes for 'good ethnography', considering the different conditions and types of people involved in conducting this research. Nonetheless, he did argue that the earliest studies that can be considered as 'important ethnography' have "generally the quality of being systematic in the sense of being comprehensive" (1996: 4).[20]

Hymes' work has influenced many studies on CMC (see Androutsopoulos, 2008; Herring, 2007; Kytölä, 2013), particularly in terms of the role that an ethnographic epistemology can play in the analysis of language in society. In effect, comprehensiveness has been highlighted as a necessary quality for understanding online cultural spaces by academics such as Yang (2003: 471), who assumes the role of a

[19] Blommaert and Dong (2010) summarise these ontological and epistemological standpoints by arguing that "[t]here is no way in which knowledge of language can be separated from the situatedness of the object at a variety of levels of 'context' and involving, reflexively, these acts of knowledge production by ethnographers themselves" (p. 10, but see Blommaert & Dong, 2010: 7-10).

[20] This comprehensiveness involves "an interest in documenting and interpreting a wide range of a way of life" (Hymes, 1996: 4).

'guerrilla ethnographer', i.e., one who takes notes, downloads information, asks questions, thinks about the larger picture, explores links, and remains open-minded and flexible vis-à-vis the data. This last consideration involves entering the specific websites "with a mind free of preconceptions" (Yang, 2003: 471), as I noted in Section 3.4. In these observations, the usual demographic variables (e.g., age, gender, race, etc.) are not as salient as they are in face-to-face instances, but that difference is precisely what can make online ethnography a useful framework: through its lens, the question of whether a certain user is male or female, young or old, is less relevant than "the exploration of who, with what kinds of resources, and why, 'they do being' in terms of sense of self and modes of sociality in the CMC spaces" (Georgakopoulou, 2006a: 552).

Another important factor regarding online ethnography, particularly for the purposes of this thesis, is how it has been described as a suitable approach for researchers who are looking at communicative practices that involve the complexities of the 'local' and the 'global', along with the ways in which users adopt semiotic materials that circulate globally and add them to their communicative repertoires (Varis, 2015). From an ethnographic perspective, Varis (2015) emphasises the importance of investigating context rather than assuming it, particularly in the current reality of globalization and translocal environments (see Section 2.2.2), where pre-digital boundaries have been blurred by CMC.

Different approaches to online ethnography have been proposed over the years, such as 'virtual ethnography' (Hine, 2000), 'netnography' (Kozinets, 2002), 'network ethnography' (Howard, 2002), "cyberethnography" (Domínguez *et al*., 2007), 'webnography' (Puri, 2007) or 'discourse-centred online ethnography' (Androutsopoulos, 2008). As Varis (2015) maintains, what these studies have in common is the fact that they analyse various forms of digital communication and that they use a specific version or understanding of ethnography. In terms of their differences, their notion of what ethnography really is can vary from limiting it to certain techniques or methods to seeing it as an approach that involves epistemological claims.

Amongst these conceptions of online ethnography, Hine's (2000) perspective is one of the earliest proposals that brought an ethnographic dimension to online studies. Hine posited certain limitations about virtual ethnography, particularly when compared to face-to-face analyses. For Hine, online ethnographies are 'wholeheartedly partial', in

the sense that "they are almost but not quite the real thing" (2000: 62). Scholars such as Kozinets (2010: 62-63) have expressed their disagreement with this criticism, to the point of claiming that "[t]here is no *really real* ethnography, no *de facto* perfect ethnography that would satisfy every methodological purist. Nor does there need to be" (Kozinets, 2010: 62).

Similarly, I will not claim in this thesis that my approach constitutes a full holistic ethnography of the practices that can be found on IMDb, HiFi Chile and Netflix. What I intended to do, following Androutsopoulos (2008) and Kytölä (2013), is to apply "certain key tenets of ethnographic inquiry to the topic" (Kytölä, 2013: 134) to a study that is concerned with language use in online social life, and not necessarily with every aspect of the participants' social life per se. Thus, "maintaining a strong focus on discourse is a legitimate decision; a partial ethnographic engagement may therefore be sufficient for the aims of language-focused research" (Androutsopoulos, 2008: 17). In light of the above, in this thesis I drew on ethnographic principles (e.g., a systematic, comprehensive and focused observation of the sites and their participants) as opposed to conducting a full-fledged ethnography that would have included contacting the participants and asking them about their language use.

One of the crucial aspects of ethnographic inquiry that I applied was the systematic observation of the selected websites, with an emphasis on language. With regard to earlier studies that have attempted this, a key framework has been Herring's (2004) computer-mediated discourse analysis, particularly in terms of highlighting the need for systematic online observation. Androutsopoulos (2008), however, proposes going beyond the systematic observation stage through a 'discourse-centred online ethnography' (DCOE), as I stated in Section 2.2.1. Understood as a mixture of methods, DCOE "combines the systematic observation of selected sites of online discourse with direct contact with its social actors" (2008: 2).

In the case of my data, it was impossible to contact Netflix participants, since —as noted in Section 3.2.3— the site does not allow them to provide personal details of any kind, including contact information. Consequently, there would have been a lack of balance if I had approached members from two of the sites and not the other. It is also important to keep in mind that interviewing participants is not always 'a magic fix', as Varis (2015) argues: one of the problems that may arise because of this way of thinking is that people are not always able to explain or easily verbalise everything they said or

did (see Blommaert & Dong, 2010). Therefore, a systematic observation of the log data by itself could still "yield rich ethnographic insights" (Kytölä, 2013: 135). Similarly, Cora Garcia, Standlee, Beckhoff and Cui (2009) argue that, when it comes to social phenomena that exist primarily online, "it is feasible to limit the setting of the research to online/CMC phenomena" (p. 55). Thus, I made the decision of only focusing on the observations of the online data and not interviewing the users. Another issue that I took into consideration when making this choice was that, as has been mentioned, ethnography is not the only method I utilised, which allowed me to approach the log data from different perspectives.

With the above considerations in mind, Leppänen, Kytölä, Westinen and Peuronen (2017: 7) provide a comprehensive definition of what a discourse-ethnographic orientation entails in digital environments, which also brings together several of the issues described above

> an engagement in focused, systematic and long-term online observation and analysis of social media participants' linguistic, semiotic, and other discursive choices and patterns in the context of their activities and interactions in digital settings for the purposes of describing and explaining their social meanings, identities and relations.

As Table 3.4 shows below, the application of these ethnographic principles informed both the early stages of this thesis (see Sections 3.3, 3.4 and 3.5) and the subsequent data analysis. In regards to the former, this relates to how ethnographic studies 'offer data' by showing us how people use language to get things done online, as well as how they make sense of the things they do (Page *et al*., 2014). Table 3.4 also shows the role that these ethnographic principles played during the data analysis, along with the other methods I shall describe in more detail in the following sections.

Table 3.4 Timeline of application of ethnographic principles

January 2014 – June 2015	Observations of the data before the actual data collection. Identification of main aspects of the sites (discussions, their cultural context, types of participation, the participants and their practices, etc.). [21]
June 2015 – July 2015	Evaluation of the different types of data sampling that were available, as well as which would be more suitable for this thesis. This entailed, as noted (see Section 3.3), discarding alternatives such as random sampling, sampling by phenomenon, by convenience, or by individuals or members of a group. After considering these options, I decided to combine sampling by topic and by time. In this sense, the systematic observations of the sites and their characteristics I had carried out in the previous period helped me to make this decision.
July 2015 – December 2015	Data collection and selection, which entailed daily observations of the data, whereby the method of observation would consist of checking whether there were new posts in the specific sections already identified. This period also included

[21] This period also entailed other processes that go beyond the application of ethnographic principles, such as getting acquainted with the theory available, identifying potential gaps, and producing a first draft of: the theoretical framework, my research questions, and the data and methods I would be using.

	keeping fieldnotes of, for instance, the new usernames I assigned to the participants in order to protect their privacy (see Section 3.7).
December 2015 – December 2016	Analysis of the data. Along with the application of the other methods that will be described, this involved incorporating the aforementioned discursive choices and patterns I had observed in the context of the participants' activities and settings.

In sum, drawing on ethnographic principles can provide a rich analysis through systematic and careful observations of the data. The next two sections will deal with obtaining patterns, both quantitatively (Section 3.6.2 – corpus linguistics) and qualitatively (Section 3.6.3 - coding).

3.6.2 Corpus linguistics

Corpus linguistics originally gained popularity as a consequence of the "advent of personal computers in the 1990s" (Baker, 2010: 5). Biber, Conrad and Reppen (1998) state that one of the essential aspects of a corpus-based analysis is that it is empirical, in the sense that it attempts to analyse the patterns of language use in natural texts. It also utilises a corpus as its basis for analysis, a concept they define as "a large and principled collection of natural texts" (p. 4). Baker adds that a corpus refers to "a 'body' of language, or more specifically, a (usually) very large collection of naturally occurring language, stored as computer files" (2010: 6).

The increasing reach of the internet during the past few decades prompted debates as to whether we could consider 'the web as a corpus'. From this perspective, digital content is seen as "freely available online documents accessed directly as a corpus" (Fletcher,

2007: 28). Although Fletcher (2007: 27) acknowledges that online texts are not easy to evaluate or exploit in an efficient manner, he highlights that this material offers linguistic diversity; scope and completeness (since certain texts only exist on the web, like wikis or discussion forums); and access is usually free and easily available for researchers and students. Conversely, scholars such as Sinclair (2005) express their disagreement by pointing out that the internet's dimensions are unknown and ever-changing, along with the fact that it was not designed from a linguistic perspective. Where there seems to be more consensus is in the possibility of researchers building their own corpora from content (both linguistic and semiotic) that draws on CMC, i.e., the approach known as 'web for corpus', where this corpus is compiled from websites (Fletcher, 2007: 28). Some of these initiatives have been the 25 billion-word USENET corpus or the Birmingham Blog Corpus (see Page *et al*., 2014: 156 for more examples).

In terms of corpus linguistic work on discussion forums, Claridge's 2007 study is particularly relevant, as it seems to be one of the few approaches that have used this method to analyse this kind of platform. For instance, Claridge ponders whether threads should constitute the basic units of this type of corpus, instead of the forums in their entirety. The reason for this is that it would allow researchers to analyse the effect of topic in linguistic usage from a wider perspective (2007: 98). She also challenges Lewin and Donner's (2002: 29) claim that emotion and tones cannot be conveyed in web forums; she mentions acronyms (e.g., 'lol;), emoticons, the repetition of punctuation marks ('!', '?'*)*, capitalization, and the use of italics, bold-face, and asterisks in order to show emphasis. For her, "[i]n writing, all of these elements acquired the characteristics of a linguistic sign and thus need to be considered in the investigation" (2007: 99). In addition, lexical means could also be included in a corpus linguistic study of message boards that focuses on the expression of attitudes, emotions and evaluations. These can include "directly evaluative items such as verbs of (dis)liking (with first-person subjects)" (Claridge, 2007: 99). These instances can come in the form of strong expressions of love and, particularly, hate.

As I noted in Section 2.2.3, it is precisely on instances of evaluation that I wish to focus on in this thesis, since they play a significant role within online reviews. Along with Claridge's aforementioned findings in terms of message boards, Vásquez's (2014a) analysis of a corpus of online reviews also serves as a helpful example as to how to carry out this approach, highlighting aspects that may be salient through, for instance, a

comparison with a reference corpus. Vásquez's study allowed her to identify high frequencies of certain words that are usually associated with evaluations such as the "negator *no*, evaluative adjective *good*, intensifying adverb *very*, stance adverb *just* and the multi-class, multi-functional word *like*" (pp. 31-32). In the specific case of Netflix, the five most frequent adjectives were 'good', 'great', 'funny', 'beautiful', and 'best' (Vásquez, 2014a: 32). In my analysis of the data, I will also look at the most frequent — and salient, when compared to reference corpora— evaluation resources, including adverbs, adjectives, etc.

Another important consideration regarding corpus linguistics is the need for a reference corpus (see Section 4.4), that is, a benchmark or yardstick that can be regarded for comparison with the corpus, or corpora, from our data (Leech, 2002). My intention, thus, will be to use corpus linguistics as a way of identifying certain lexico-grammatical patterns within these reviews. Such a perspective, as Page (2018) maintains, drawing on Tognini-Bonelli (2001), relates to the *corpus-driven paradigm*, whereby the analysis starts with the examination of lexical patterns, such as keywords, and then gives way to the examination of concordance lines and the interactional context where these patterns take place. However, if I were to only rely on this approach, as Page (2018) herself acknowledges, then the pragmatics of language use in interactions that correspond to a micro-level could be overlooked and even left without explanation (see Kytölä & Androutsopoulos, 2012: 180). My aim, therefore, will be to use this quantitative approach "as a 'signpost' for qualitative analyses of the interactions" (Kytölä, 2012a: 114). In this way, the corpus-oriented findings in the first analytical chapter (Chapter 4), such as keywords and multi-keywords, will be looked at in more detail through a qualitative approach in the subsequent analysis of the data, with a focus on references to genre (Chapter 5) and personal narratives of film-watching experiences (Chapter 6).

3.6.3 Coding

Unlike the previous methods, there is no available definition for what 'coding' really is nor, as De Fina (2016) maintains, a baseline system for coding online comments. In light of this, it could be useful to draw on how researchers who have looked at online platforms have described their coding process. Myers (2010: 46), for instance,

characterises his own coding of blogs as "counting things and comparing", something that he situates as closer to a quantitative than a qualitative study. Conversely, Kozinets (2010: 124-129) places the possibility of coding texts as one of the things that can be done with Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS). The manual qualitative coding process I undertook was assisted by the software NVivo, which enabled me to highlight areas of the texts and code them with a specific name. The elaboration of these codes —or nodes, as they are called in NVivo— was key to identifying certain patterns that a quantitative analysis would not necessarily reveal. As stated in Section 3.5, 1,800 posts were sampled for the corpus linguistic analysis. Nevertheless, the coding process also included the aforementioned IMDb posts that I had collected from the weeks that were later deleted from the site. Consequently, the total amount of posts I coded was 1,822.

The categories of codes I came up with were refined during the process of analysis. In this sense, some coding categories collapsed into others, while others were left out altogether. For instance, some codes such as *repetition of letters* ended up being incorporated into the *Discourse-level evaluation strategies* code, which I will describe below. I also drew both on Vásquez (2014a) repeated observations of online reviews from a discursive perspective and De Fina's (2016) coding of online storytelling and audience reaction. By combining these two criteria, I incorporated categories from Vásquez's research such as *Discourse-level evaluation strategies* and two from De Fina's study, i.e., *Medium* and *Tone*. Between these categories and my own, I produced a set of main codes (or top level nodes, as NVivo calls them), which vary in terms of their scope and the issues they encompass. These codes are (and I shall provide details about each of them below):

- Discourse-level evaluation strategies.
- Medium.
- References to place.
- References to time.
- Stories.
- Tone.

Each of the posts counted as one unit of analysis that was coded, i.e., if I state that there were 12 occurrences of *References to time*, that means that it happened in 12 separate posts. Furthermore, different codes were assigned to the same post: for instance, the same review may be coded for more several categories.

Vásquez (2014a) describes *Discourse-level evaluation strategies* as a bottom-up approach that moves away from a quantitative, top-down perspective, usually involving numbers regarding frequency, keyness, etc. The discourse-level evaluation strategies she identifies are interjections, slang expressions, rhetorical questions, justification of star ratings, and including the assessment of others. This last notion pertains to instances where reviewers mention the assessment of other people, such as friends or family, who share the experience being evaluated, as a way of establishing their credibility (Vásquez, 2014a: 48-49). Nonetheless, instances of this in my data were so rare that I ended up discarding it as a potential code: the participants do at times state that they watched a particular film with someone else, but they do not usually include the evaluations of family or friends in their own reviews. Furthermore, I added two extra codes that Vásquez does not incorporate in her study: the use of exclamation marks and the repetition of letters. The reason behind this decision was that, as I argue in the analysis of the data (see Section 4.7), reviewers employ exclamation marks and capital letters as a way to emphasise a specific sentiment regarding the film in question, much like with other discourse-evaluation strategies such as slang expressions or rhetorical questions.

The *Discourse-level evaluation strategies* I coded, then, were the following:

- Use of slang.

- Rhetorical questions.

- Interjections.

- Justification of star rating.

- Exclamation marks.

- Repetition of letters.

Medium pertains to the use of semiotic affordances such as uploading pictures and videos to the reviews, as well as participants employing GIFs. De Fina (2016) does not include emoticons in her coding structure for media, nor does she explain why, but I decided to incorporate them as another semiotic element that can be combined with text or be present by itself.

The subcategories coded for *Medium* were:

- Text only.

- Text and video.

- Text and photo.

- Text and GIF.

- Text and emoticon.

- Video only.

- Photo only.

- GIF only.

- Emoticon only.

References to place involve any mention of a geographical location. Although the references in this case can often be to a particular country, in some other scenarios they can involve a region (e.g., Latin America), which is why I allude to *cultures* and not *countries*. Furthermore, due to the prominence that Hollywood, and the US, in turn, tend to have within discussions about cinema, I included specific codes for references to the US as a country, both negative and positive/neutral, and Hollywood, also both negative and positive. I made this decision after noticing that some references to the US in the data would be directed towards aspects like its political system, their economic system, etc. (usually stemming from something that a given film portrays about these issues), whereas direct references to Hollywood would always relate to the industry.

Thus, the subcategories were the following:

- References to own cultures (positive-neutral).

- References to own cultures (negative).

- References to other cultures (positive-neutral) [non US].

- References to other cultures (negative) [non US].

- US positive-neutral.

- US negative.

- Hollywood positive.

- Hollywood negative.

I will provide some examples of these codes below.

An occurrence of the *References to own cultures* [*positive/neutral*] code can be seen in Example 3.1. Here, a Netflix LATAM member reviews the Mexican film *Cásese quien pueda* (2014) and states that, although it may not be like films from the US, he/she loved it for the simple fact that it is a Latin American production. Instead of stating that he/she loved the film because it is from Mexico, this participant chooses to frame it as being from Latin America, seemingly taking pride in the fact that it belongs to his/her culture. As stated above, this is why I chose to code these instances as *references to cultures* as opposed to *references to countries*.

Example 3.1 - No username or date of publication provided, Netflix LATAM –[22]

a lo mejor no es como las películas de Estados Unidos ni nada por el estilo pero me encanto por que es de Latino América.

[*maybe it's not like films from the US or anything like that, but I loved it because it's from Latin America*].

The opposite scenario, but also involving a reference to Latin America, can be seen in Example 3.2. In this case, this participant, also a Netflix LATAM member, writes about the Spanish film *Para Elisa* (2013). In a rare case in the data, this user recognises that he/she has not watched the movie due to the negative comments it has received on the

[22] As I explained in Section 3.2.3, Netflix reviews are completely anonymous and there is no date of publication provided. Due to this, all examples of Netflix reviews will not include username or date, but they will be included in those taken from IMDb and HiFi Chile (with usernames altered, as I will discuss in Section 3.7).

site. Subsequently, this participant launches into a diatribe regarding the content that Netflix offers, including a statement about how Latin American allegedly likes '*rubbish TV*'. The mention here, then, is not to a country in particular, but again to a region at large, with all the different cultures it encompasses. However, and unlike Example 3.1, this user —who writes in Spanish and due to the mere fact that he/she has access to Netflix LATAM, and not another region, should be Latin American— seems to be depicting his/her own culture in a negative light.

Example 3.2 - No username or date of publication provided, Netflix LATAM -

No he visto la película y tampoco creo que lo haga ya que los comentarios no es que sean muy positivos. Solo quiero decir que hay una gran cantidad de películas muy buenas que son prácticamente de culto que no están aquí. Hay mucho contenido basura. Se que dividen el contenido por regiones y como a Latinoamérica le gusta mas que nada la tele basura entiendo que suban malas películas… lamentable.

[*I haven't watched the film and I don't think I will either since the comments are not precisely positive. I just want to say that there's a great quantity of very good films that are almost cult-like that aren't here. There's a lot of rubbish content. I know that they divide the content by regions and since Latin America likes rubbish TV over anything else I understand that they upload bad films… unfortunate*].

As I stated above, most of the negative references to other countries are directed towards the US. In Example 3.3, nonetheless, IMDb user *Perception_of_Uncertainty* makes fun of the fact that there is a Japanese urban legend about a toilet ghost, depicted in the Japanese film *Hanako: Phantom of the Toilet* (1998). [23] Although this is not an attack towards Japanese people, the ironic tone with which the plot is discussed ('*Of course the Japanese would have such an urban legend*') conveys a degree of mockery towards culture from this country. Furthermore, as I note in more detail below (see Example 3.15), this IMDb participant is prone to ironically mention genres that do not really exist, such as toilet ghost films or dog fighting movies. In this case, *Perception_of_Uncertainty* even ends the post by asking another user about his/her favourite toilet ghost film, which, again, is quite rare and specific in terms of its plot.

[23] Following the *light disguise* alternative I described in Section 3.7, all usernames were changed.

Finally, the systematic observation of the data allowed me to notice that this user is German, which means that this participant is referring to another culture, i.e., Japanese.

Example 3.3 - *Perception_of_Uncertainty*, 30 November 2015, IMDb -

Hanako: Phantom of the Toilet - A toilet ghost for grammar schoolgirls. Of course the Japanese would have such an urban legend. Incidentally the third stall has always been the one I used. Sounds interesting, actually. So what would you say is the best toilet ghost movie?

In the case of positive reference to other cultures, the HiFi Chile user in Example 3.4 praises '*the Swedish*' in general due to how much he/she liked Swedish film *Låt den rätte komma in* (2008). It is worth noting that this user also criticises Hollywood, which is another of the codes included, as *Hollywood negative*, within *References to place*.

Example 3.4 - *Striker*, 7 August 2015, HiFi Chile -

En estos días vi una película sueca llamada "Déjame entrar" o "Låt den rätte komma in".

Es una peli muy especial, que trata de un tema ampliamente conocido y manoseado hasta el hartazgo por Joliwud, pero esta vez presentado con un lenguaje cinematográfico fresco, diferente, casi hermoso diría yo, todo acompañado por una fotografía y sonido acorde... Los Suecos nunca me dejan de asombrar!

Altamente recomendable!

[*These past few days I watched a Swedish film called* "Låt den rätte komma in".

It's a very special flick that deals with a well-known topic and overdone by Joliwud [*Hollywood*]*, but this time presented with fresh cinematographic language, different, almost beautiful I'd say, everything accompanied by fitting photography and sound… The Swedish never cease to amaze!*

Highly recommendable!].

The code *US negative* gathers instances where the US in general, as opposed to Hollywood in particular, is mentioned pejoratively. In Example 3.5, HiFi Chile *pipino* is quite straightforward when it comes to reviewing the Hollywood film *Jack Ryan: Shadow Recruit* (2014): after describing it as '*bad*', it is deemed *'gringa*'. In this

particular review, something being *gringo* or *gringa* is mentioned in a clearly pejorative manner. As I show in the data analysis (see Section 5.4.2), different words in Spanish are deployed in order to index this negative stance on Hollywood and the US.

Example 3.5 - *pipino*, 26 October 2015, HiFi Chile -

Ayer vi Jack Ryan... Mala la wea, muy pero muy gringa.

[*Yesterday I watched Jack Ryan. Bad, the rubbish, very, but very, gringa*].

Conversely, Example 3.6 shows an instance where there is a reference to '*good North American cinema*' in regards to *Black Mass* (2015) and *Beasts of No Nation* (2015). Although an implicit reference to Hollywood, this user opts to praise North American cinema, even if neither film was made in Mexico or Canada. Therefore, this constitutes an example whereby the US is referenced positively.

Example 3.6 - *césar*, 18 October 2015, HiFi Chile -

Vi dos películas del buen cine norteamericano: Black Mass, una película basada en hechos reales sobre la mafia de los años 70 en Boston, si no confirmo que es basada en hechos reales, jamás me hubiese creído el guión.

La otra fue Beasts of No Nation, la primera película producida por Netflix, disponible para verla ahí mismo. Muy buena.

[*I watched two films from the good North American cinema: Black Mass, a film based on real events about the mob in Boston during the 70s, if I hadn't confirmed that it's based on real events, I would've never believed the plot.*

The other one was Beasts of No Nation, the first film produced by Netflix, available right now over there. Very good].

In other reviews, there are direct references to Hollywood. As I shall argue in detail (see Section 5.4.2), negative references are far more frequent than positive references. In regards to the former, Example 3.7 represents an instance where *Hollywood* is actually

used as an adjective, i.e., the *'Hollywood-ish last 20 minutes or so'* of *The Philadelphia Story* (1940), which basically spoiled the movie for this user.

Example 3.7 *s-h-2008*, 6 December 2015, IMDb

The Philadelphia Story (1940) - 8+/10. It was a strong 9 until the phony and extremely Hollywood-ish last 20 minutes or so

On the other hand, Example 3.8 shows a positive reference regarding Hollywood. IMDb user describes *Face/Off* (1997), a Hollywood film that belongs to the *blockbuster* genre, as '*cool*' and the less enthusiastic '*undemanding*', which essentially implies that *Face*/*Off* is a film well-suited to pass the time, albeit not necessarily a dense, intellectual production (see Section 5.4.1).

Example 3.8 - *Iris*, 7 December 2015, IMDb -

Face Off is a cool undemanding action blockbuster with Travolta and Cage on top form.

References to time relate either to the films themselves or the circumstances of the film-watching experience. An important clarification here is how I distinguished between *remoteness* and *recency*. In order to do so, I followed Vásquez's (2015) distinction, especially her claim regarding an alleged tendency towards research on digital communication to focus on recent events as opposed to remote events. Although Vásquez acknowledges that establishing a cut-off point between the two can be highly complex, it can help to move away from the 'here-and now' focus on digital communication research (see Section 6.4.2). Despite this complexity, Vásquez (2015: 7) considers any messages that include references up to a month before the post as *recent*, whereas *remote* posts contain references more than one month prior. Furthermore, she also considers lexical and grammatical time markers that signal *recency* (e.g., *today*, *right now*, *this week*, etc.) and *remoteness* (e.g., *ever made*, *as long as I can remember*, etc.).

References to wasting time constitute reviews where users complain about having lost their time watching a particular film or warn others not to do the same, whereas

References to films that are 'good to pass the time' involve users' recommendations that are phrased in such a way.

- References to wasting time.

- References to films that are 'good to pass the time'.

- References to remoteness.

- References to recency.

In the case of *Stories*, I coded any review that went beyond a mere evaluation and incorporated "some account, or story, of personal experience" (Vásquez, 2014a: 140) within their reviews (see Section 3.6.4). As I shall argue (see Chapter 6), certain types of stories became more prominent in the analysis of the data, including 'multiple-viewing stories' and second stories.

Finally, *Tone* is taken from De Fina's (2016: 484-485) coding framework of audience reactions to online storytelling. The subcategories are:

- Amicable: Posts that include a friendly or positive tone towards someone or something (De Fina, 2016: 485). For my coding system, the 'someone' was usually another user or the other participants in general, and the 'something' was typically the film being reviewed. Some of the ways in which this was signalled involved the use of specific greetings, expressions of praise or solidarity towards other participants, exclamation marks, and smiley faces.

- Aggressive: As opposed to 'Amicable', here there is a hostile or negative tone directed towards someone (mainly other users) or something, i.e., again, the films themselves (De Fina, 2016: 484). This hostile or negative tone is usually conveyed through insults such as derogatory adjectives, curse words or by posts consisting solely of capital letters, which are accompanied by one or more of the aforementioned features.

- Ironic: Posts that involve a sarcastic or mocking tone towards someone or something (De Fina, 2016: 485). Some examples of this type of instance are the use of sophisticated or metaphoric vocabulary, as well as emoticons that stress that the post is humorous rather than serious within a particular context.

- Neutral: Posts that do not have either a positive or negative tone (De Fina, 2016: 485). These are posts with a tone that is less straightforward than the other categories: in this case, there are no noticeable friendly gestures, hostile interactions or ironic displays.

Although De Fina acknowledges that coding something like tone can be difficult, and that not all posts are clear-cut when it comes to whether the user was, for instance, being ironic or just aggressive, the descriptions provided above were useful for me in terms of following a defined criterion during the coding process. Furthermore, coding tone is "important in order to understand how confrontational or nonconfrontational these online exchanges are" (De Fina, 2016: 485). Also, by way of clarification, it should be noted that I coded the dominant tone for each post instead of all the tones that *one* specific review could have.

Since coding for tone is, as noted, a complex endeavour, I will provide examples of each code.

Amicable tone, as stated above, is related to a positive or friendly evaluation about something or someone. In the example below, the 'something' is the film *Lo mejor de mí* [*The Best of Me*] (2014). This user employs positive adjectives (e.g., *divine, beautiful*) and verbs (*loved*), which are complemented by the repeated use of a *Discourse-level evaluation strategy* such as the employment of (repeated) exclamation marks. Unlike other examples that I will show below, the positive tone here is aimed at the film itself, not at other participants.

Example 3.9 - No username or date of publication provided, Netflix LATAM -

Me encantó!!!! divina historia de amor! súper recomendable!!! Linda historia, te vuelve a tu infancia. Lástima el final, pero el resto divina.

[*I loved it!!!! A divine love story! Super recommendable!!! Beautiful story, it takes you back to your childhood. A pity about the ending, but the rest is divine*].

As noted, amicable posts can involve some kind of expression of solidarity from one user to another. In this case, IMDb member *unneeded direction* responds to participant *Perception_of_Uncertainty*'s analysis of the film *Being Two Isn't Easy* (1962):

Example 3.10 - *unneededdirection*, 6 December 2015, IMDb –

Glad you enjoyed Being Two Isn't Easy as well (it and Tokyo Tribe were all I was able to watch this week). Your review is a wonderful sum up of the film, though I would say that it is quite a sentimental film (just more strategically placed than the average film about children).

By using the adjective *wonderful* to talk about *Perception_of_Uncertainty*'s review, *unneededdirection* not only praises this user's contribution, but also validates him in an ongoing discussion that not only involves both of them, but also the rest of the active participants, as well as the *lurkers* on the site.

Similarly, the example below also involves an agreement between users, this time about the film *Child 44* (2015), but it also includes several adjectives that convey how much participant *felipe rodríguez* enjoyed the film. Moreover, this user deploys a *Discourse-level evaluation strategy*, the use of capital letters, so as to emphasise how long it has been since he liked a film so much.

Example 3.11 - *felipe rodríguez*, 7 August 2015, HiFi Chile -

me robaste las palabras... puta la película buena....!!! HACE RATO que una película no me encantaba..!! buenísima, actores y actuaciones soberbias, historia muy bien contada...! una genialidad..!

[*you stole the words from me… what a great f*cking film…!!! I hadn't enjoyed a film as much as this IN A WHILE..!! very good, great actors and superb performances, a well-told story…! A work of genius..!*

Amongst the instances where there is an *Aggressive* tone, Example 3.12 shows a Netflix reviewer insulting both the characters portrayed in the film through the use of adjectives such as *boring* and *rubbish,* and also the potential spectators of the film ('*Only someone without a brain would waste their time watching this'*). As opposed to attacking a specific user, this last insult is directed at a group of hypothetical people who, unlike this reviewer, will enjoy this film, or at least give it their full attention. This in turn, means that this reviewer is attacking people who will not share his/her point of view regarding the film not being '*worth it*'.

Example 3.12 - No username or date of publication provided, Netflix LATAM -

La típica película sobre los típicos jóvenes neoyorkinos haciendo la típica basura neoyorkina aburrida. No vale la pena. Solamente un descerebrado perdería su tiempo viendo esto.

[*The typical film about the typical young New Yorkers doing the typical boring New York rubbish. It's not worth it. Only someone without a brain would waste their time watching this*].

In a similar vein, the Netflix reviewer below maintains that anyone spending more than 7 minutes watching the film at hand should go to therapy. In this way, there is also an attack that is not aimed at a specific member of the community, but at anyone who may not share this user's perspective, i.e., that the film is not worth even 8 minutes of people's time. The attack here is subtler than in the example above, since there are no derogatory adjectives, but it does involve a suggestion that people who spend more than the aforementioned amount of time watching this film may have some kind of mental issue.

Example 3.13 - No username or date of publication provided, Netflix LATAM -

También aguanté 7 minutos viéndola, si superas esa marca, es mejor que vayas al psicólogo.

[*I lasted 7 minutes watching it as well, if you beat that mark, you better go to the psychologist*].

The next example offers a more straightforward attack, i.e., the use of the adjective *stupid*. This time, however, it is not aimed at those who contest the reviewer's evaluation, but on those criticising the film as '*palomero*', which in Spanish is a pejorative way of associating popcorn with the kind of cinema that Hollywood tends to offer (see Section 5.4.2).

Example 3.14 - No username or date of publication provided, Netflix LATAM -

No hagan caso a la gente estúpida que dice que es un churro palomero, que es lo peor que han visto, que perdieron su tiempo, que es predecible, etc. La película es buena para recostarse en el sofá y verla de principio a fin y reírse sanamente de las pendejadas que salen cada rato

[*Don't pay attention to the stupid people who say that this film is cheesy and palomero, that it's the worst thing they've seen, that they wasted their time, that it's predictable, etc. The movie is*

good to lie down on the couch and watch from beginning to end and laugh at the absurd things that happen. Martha Higareda shows what she should show and that's appreciated].

An example of an *Ironic* tone can be seen in the next example, which finds an IMDb user rating two films, *The Extermination Angel* (1962) and *Amores perros* (2000). As I also note in the data analysis (see Section 6.4), this particular user tends to have an ironic tone when sharing reviews. In this case, he first calls *The Extermination Angel*, one of his favourite documentaries, when it is, in fact, a fictional work that combined comedy, drama and fantasy. Subsequently, he calls *Amores perros* one of his favourite dog fighting movies when that, actually, is not really a genre, as films rarely depict this activity. Here, ethnography was essential: had I not observed this participant's behaviour for months, I would not have made much of this post; as a matter of fact, I might have just thought he was wrong about one film being a documentary and just very specific regarding the other one being part of a genre of dog fighting films. However, the observations I carried out allowed me to see that this user would often convey something other than the literal meaning for comedic purposes, e.g., *The Extermination Angel* is not a documentary and there is no such thing as a genre consisting of dogs fighting.

Example 3.15 - *Perception_of_Uncertainty*, 14 December 2015, IMDb -

The Exterminating Angel - One of my favorite documentaries - 7+

Amores Perros - One of my favorite dog fighting movies. – 8

Example 3.16 represents another instance where this same participant also means something other than the literal meaning of his utterance. Replying to another member who reviewed the film *Naked* (1991), he responds:

Example 3.16 - *Perception_of_Uncertainty*, 29 November 2015, IMDb -

Naked is the best. The film is great, too. - 8

Angst - You know. – 7

Although at first it would seem he is agreeing with the other participant about the film being good, he then clarifies that the film *'is great, too'*, thereby implying that the statement about *naked* being the best was about something else, possibly the sensation of not wearing any clothes. Once again, observing these communities for a given period of time was instrumental when it came to interpreting some of these posts.

As mentioned above, an ironic tone can also be directed towards someone, e.g., another participant. In Example 3.17, user *ian anderson* replies to *Miguel Z67*, who usually reviews films from the 1950s and 1960s, but who, this time, reviewed the 2014 film *Phoenix*. The response that *ian anderson* provides is one that not only teases *Miguel Z67* for the aforementioned tendency to watch old films, but it also conveys something other than the literal meaning: it is not really as if *Miguel Z67* did not know that films kept being made after that date, since anyone relatively familiar with cinema would know that is no the case, but the statement is made to tease this participant, which is emphasised by the use of a smiley face.

Example 3.17 - *ian anderson*, 18 December 2015, HiFi Chile -

Parece que [Miguel] descubrió que se siguió haciendo cine después de 1960 ☺.

[*Looks like Miguel found out that films kept being made after 1960 ☺*].

Finally, a *Neutral* tone consist of reviews were there is no discernible attitude, whether positive, negative or humorous. As Example 3.18 shows, this usually involves merely the titles of the films and a rating, without any further detail. In this case, it is hard to conclude that the tone was aggressive, amicable or ironic if the only words provided are the names of the films.

Example 3.18 - *Perception_of_Uncertainty*, 28 December 2015, IMDb -

Cold Fish - 6

Infernal Affairs - 6 (9+ for 'The Departed')

Air Force One - 6 or so

Slow West - 6 again

The Raid: Redemption - 7

Fury - 6

Inside Out - 9

As can be seen in the example below, this kind of review tends to take place on IMDb. Here, another user does the same thing.

Example 3.19 - *Pia82*, 13 December 2015, IMDb –

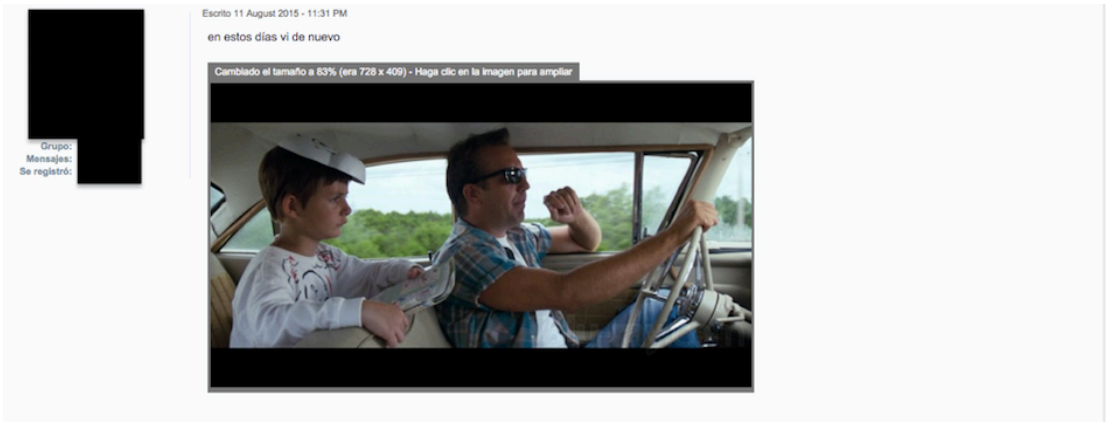
Murder on the Home Front (2013) - 7/10

Brooklyn (2015) - 6/10

Skin Game (1971) - 7/10

Another example of a neutral tone comes on this post from HiFi Chile. This user merely talks about the film that he/she watched recently and attaches a picture of it, but does not elaborate further. Therefore, there is no noticeable tone on this post, either positive or negative.

Figure 3.2 Screenshot of HiFi Chile review with picture



[*I watched again recently* + picture]

As can be seen from one of the codes in this scheme, stories play a role in the data. In the next section, I focus on narrative approaches within digital communication.

3.6.4 Small stories research

The methodological perspective of small stories research (Bamberg, 2004, 2006; Bamberg & Georgakopoulou, 2008; Georgakopoulou, 2006b, 2006c, 2007) takes in "a gamut of under-represented narrative activities, such as tellings of ongoing activities, future or hypothetical events, shared (known) events, but also allusions to (previous) tellings, deferrals of tellings and refusals to tell" (De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2012: 116). Thus, this approach challenges some of the earlier conceptions within narrative analysis, particularly those that stem from Labov's influential work (1972, although initially it was Labov & Waleztky, 1967). As Bamberg and Georgakopoulou (2008) maintain, this type of life stories or autobiographies worked under a certain guided assumption that

> [S]tories are privileged forms/structures/systems for making sense of self by bringing the coordinates of time, space, and personhood into a unitary frame so that the sources 'behind' these representations (such as 'author', 'teller', and 'narrator') can be made empirically visible for further analytical scrutiny in the form of 'identity analysis' (p. 378).

In a similar vein, Ochs and Capps (2001: 57) argue in favour of an approach that departed from conventional narratives that usually focused on plotlines that entailed a beginning, middle and end, with a particular perspective that is conveyed, especially designed for a specific audience. Consequently, as Bamberg and Georgakopoulou (2008: 378) state, there was an emphasis on the need to move away from the 'autobiographical model', also known as 'the narrative canon' or 'big story research' to a more social dimension in which "people use stories in everyday, mundane situations in order to create (and perpetuate) a sense of who they are" (Bamberg & Georgakopoulou, 2008: 378-379).

Small stories, then, often emerge as 'counter-stories', that is, those that fall outside the aforementioned 'big stories' and corresponding expectations of who the tellers should be and what they should tell (Georgakopoulou, 2014). In this regard, small stories

research can be viewed not only as an analytical toolkit, but as an epistemology, since "[i]t becomes an ideological standpoint for the analyst who seeks to 'listen' to such counter-stories and make them hearable" (Georgakopoulou, 2014: 10). Moreover, Georgakopoulou (2014) points out that the crux of small stories research as an epistemology "is about the researchers reflecting on their roles and investment in the narrative research process" (p. 10). In my case, this involved paying attention to what I identified as stories within cinematic reviews, which have been described as being 'less narrative' than hotel or restaurant reviews (Vásquez, 2014a). Moreover, my investment in the narrative research process entailed noticing first, and subsequently posing, a new genre of stories, such as *multiple-viewing stories* (see Chapter 6).

Among the kinds of narrations that can be considered small stories, Georgakopoulou (2007) identifies 'stories to be told', 'breaking news', 'projections', and 'shared stories'. In the case of online studies, as shown by Page's (2010) work on status updates on Facebook, some of the most salient small stories tend to be 'breaking news' and 'projections'. In the former type, "tellers seem to wish to share the reported events straight away, as they are still unfolding" (Georgakopoulou, 2007: 42), whereas the latter involves the construction of a taleworld that consists of events which have not yet happened (Georgakopoulou, 2007: 47). As has been argued (Myers, 2010; Page, 2010), this emphasis on 'newness' as opposed to less recent events is particularly salient on social networking sites, blogs and wikis. Nevertheless, there has been a case made for other genres such as online reviews, where users do mention their historical relationship with a product or service, to be considered a type of 'small story', namely since they also tend to be fragmented and concise, in contrast to 'big stories' (Vásquez, 2014a: 154-155). Furthermore, in her work on online reviews, Vásquez (2014a: 140) points out how, "[b]y virtue of their primary function (i.e., to evaluate and assess a product or service), reviews are clearly evaluative before they are narrative", in the sense that their main function is to evaluate something, not to narrate. However, she argues that there is a strong link between evaluation and narrativity: although some of these consumer reviews exclusively incorporate a description and an evaluation, "many reviewers combine evaluation with some account, or story, of personal experience" (p. 140).

In the case of online reviews of films, Vásquez argues that most of the ones in her data would not be clearly recognisable as narratives, especially when compared to reviews of hotels or recipes. Nonetheless, that is not to say that users do not ever write these movie

reviews as a narration of a personal experience: Vásquez actually concentrates on a case where the reviewer starts with her initial impression of the film, based on the trailer. She then follows by talking about her (negative) expectations, her reaction upon a first viewing, and then a second viewing (2014a: 150). The author of the review, thus, "places herself and her own experiences and perspectives at the centre of the text" (Vásquez, 2014a: 151). She also uses the narrative dimension as a resource that helps her to personalize the review and to highlight her relationship with what is being reviewed (Vásquez, 2014a: 152).

There is another feature in Vásquez's data that consists of personal information, albeit here the disclosures are rather minimal. This information is provided in a fragmented manner, and is mainly related to the user's aesthetic and taste preferences, or to the circumstances that surrounded the viewing of the film. In this sense, even if they could not be labelled full-fledged narratives, through the use of the first-person and past tense references, these posts "lend a slightly narrative flavour to the larger reviews they are part of" (2014a: 153). Moreover, the salience of fragmented disclosures of personal information or experience brings us back to small stories research, since De Fina and Georgakopoulou (2012: 121-122) emphasise that aspects such as the fragmentation of stories on online platforms —along with having multiple authors— are some of the features through which online stories depart from the aforementioned 'canonical' or 'big stories'.

Small stories research will thus be employed in this thesis to analyse those reviews in which narratives of personal experience are embedded into the evaluations of these online reviews and discussions. As has been argued in this section, said disclosures may be fragmented, and might have more in common with the small moments of talk than with fully-fledged narratives (Georgakopoulou, 2007: 36). Moreover, this approach works together with coding in the analysis of the data (see Chapter 6), as I coded narratives as reviews where users offer "some account, or story, of personal experience" (Vásquez, 2014a: 140), following the description of narratives on reviews provided above. In the case of film reviews, this can involve the expectations they had before seeing the film and their subsequent evaluation after watching it; the personal trajectory they may have with a given movie through the years; or the reported experiences they had while watching a film.

In the next section, I discuss the ethical issues that my research involves.

3.7 Ethical considerations

Bearing in mind that the data in this thesis consists of what users have written online, ethical issues need to be considered, since the research involves people as participants. The complex part of this exercise is that there is no actual rulebook in terms of what is accepted and what is not within internet studies. As Page *et al*. (2014: 60-61) point out, the Association of Internet Research does provide a set of guidelines, but even its latest version does not offer prescriptions that can be applied to every research project. Thus, ethical decisions have to be considered depending on a case-by-case basis (see Markham & Buchanan, 2012). The absence of a single set of recommendations for online studies from an ethical perspective can cause what Vásquez has referred to as "navigating the murky waters of research ethics in this relatively new, though continuously changing, online context" (2014a: 19). In a similar vein, this type of research has also been described as a "grey area" (Kytölä, 2013: 69).

Within this alleged 'grey area of murky waters', some studies may involve more sensitive subjects than others. For instance, Sanders (2005) argues in favour of non-participatory observation as less controversial from an ethical standpoint than analysing direct quotations without the user's consent, mainly because her focus was on a delicate issue such as online sex work communities. Conversely, Angouri and Tseliga (2010) analyse direct quotations without having asked for permission to do so: their rationale for this is that the topics discussed in the two online forums they studied are current social issues and education, and not "personal and/or sensitive topics (e. g., sexual abuse) which could raise ethical concerns" (p. 79). In this respect, matters that usually fall within the 'universal' category of sensitive issues are "personal topics such as health, sexuality or ideologically controversial topics such as religious or political beliefs" (Page *et al*., 2014: 72), none of which are salient in this thesis.

Another aspect to keep in mind is whether we consider the content of the websites that are going to be studied private or public. Cora Garcia *et al*. (2009) emphasise that "[t]he blurring of public and private in the online world raises ethical issues around access to data and techniques for the protection of privacy and confidentiality" (p. 53). In some cases, scholars argue that their data are public, based on the fact that it is universally accessible: along these lines, in her study of online reviews, Vásquez maintains that her

focus on language (as opposed to the study of individual people or certain types of businesses) and the fact that she uses data that are publicly available online does not force her to ask for consent or special permissions (2014a: 20). These considerations seem to echo Herring's (1996b) claim that people who participate in an 'open-access forum' need to understand that, by doing so, they relinquish their privacy, since that means that their posts are not only accessible, but also copyable.

The degree to which this content is public or private also depends on the type of platform: material from boards and websites that are publicly accessible have been considered public domain data, as opposed to data that involves private interactions, such as text messaging or mailing lists (Androutsopoulos, 2008: 9). Likewise, the aforementioned work done by Angouri and Tseliga (2010: 65) also followed the reasoning that the two online forums they analysed were 'publicly available': they did get in contact with the moderators, but with the intention of exploring possibilities for eventual collaborations.

Some of the aforementioned issues also determine the extent to which informed consent is necessary. Kozinets (2010: 151) claims that it is only when the researcher interacts with the participants or intervenes that permission is required, and not when it comes to downloading posts that already exist. Furthermore, and similar to the differentiation between publicly available and private interactions, Kozinets maintains that there is no need to ask for consent in asynchronous forms of communication such as posts on bulletin boards, and the material found there can be quoted directly, albeit taking some precautions which I will discuss towards the end of this section. However, if the researcher is dealing with synchronous, real-time interactions, such as chat conversations, then he or she cannot record them without permission (2010: 151-152).

Another consideration that needs to be taken into account with regard to informed consent is the feasibility of notifying every individual of the researcher's presence or asking for their consent. A possible starting point that could be of use in this situation is to identify a gatekeeper (e.g., a moderator), who might not be one of the participants whose posts will be analysed, but with whom the ethical implications of the study can be discussed (Page *et al*., 2014: 69).

Having taken these ethical considerations into account, I now turn the discussion to the three sites in my data and the choices I made so as to protect the participants. While

IMDb and HiFi Chile are public sites in the sense that one can look at the content without being registered on the sites, one needs to be a Netflix subscriber in order to watch the content and read the reviews. Furthermore, Netflix users are completely anonymous (see Section 3.2.3), which means that there were no means to contact them (e.g., email, private message, etc.) and ask them for their permission. In light of this, I decided against asking for consent in general, but I did keep in mind a factor that should not be overlooked: the participants' privacy at the moment of reporting one's findings (see Kozinets, 2010: 152-156). The question as to how to protect them in this respect may vary depending on each country or institution, but what has been suggested as common sense for CMC researchers is that "protecting the anonymity of our informants entails avoiding disclosure of their offline identities and the publishing of any clues that may lead to their identification" (Androutsopoulos, 2014: 87-88). Since reviews on Netflix are completely anonymous, there is no risk of posts being connected to users' offline identities (unless they actually share specific details about their lives on the reviews themselves), but this precaution needed to be considered for IMDb and HiFi Chile.

In order to guarantee this protection, Bruckman (2002) proposes a classification of four degrees of disguise, that is, the extent to which certain details of the findings might be altered: 'no disguise', 'light disguise', 'moderate disguise' and 'heavy disguise'. The first and last are rather self-explanatory, whereas the main difference between 'light' and 'moderate disguise' is that the latter draws some criteria from the 'light' and the 'heavy disguise' alternatives. This makes 'moderate disguise' a somewhat confusing concept, since Bruckman does not clarify which aspects from 'light' and 'heavy disguise' this option integrates. On the other hand, she gives a clear description of 'light disguise' as the possibility that involves naming the group (in this case, the website); changing the users' names and pseudonyms; verbatim quotes are allowed, even if that means that an individual could be identified; group members and outsiders might also be able to guess the identity of the person who is being talked about; and any detail that could harm individuals should not be included.

Within these possibilities, I did not use 'no disguise' for the reasons mentioned above, particularly in terms of protecting the participants' privacy. Going to the other end of the spectrum, I consider 'heavy disguise' to be somewhat extreme; one thing is to alter some details in order to protect the subjects that were analysed, but disguising

everything could involve the risk of changing information that allows us to make sense of the discussions at hand. As I already mentioned, 'moderate disguise' does not seem to be a clear category as far as what it really entails, so it does not appear an ideal option. Therefore, I view 'light disguise' as the best alternative: it allowed me to protect the users' names or pseudonyms, but —at the same time— it does not restrict the researcher in terms of discussing the data.

I obtained ethical approval from the Research Ethics Office of King's College London on 22 May, 2015 (see Appendix A), which gave me the permission I needed to carry out the data collection.

3.8 Summary

In this chapter, I have described my data, as well as the methods I used and the ethical considerations I kept in mind with regard to the participants.

The description of the data showed the similarities between IMDb and HiFi Chile, since they are both discussion forums, and their differences when compared to Netflix LATAM. This, in turn, means that IMDb and HiFi Chile present similar affordances, e.g., users have a username, a profile picture, they can use the 'quoting' tool, etc., and constraints, e.g., they cannot like other people's post, share them, tag other participants, etc. Conversely, Netflix presents constraints in terms of users providing personal details, since they are not allowed to include any type of identification, whether it is a name, picture, etc., but it does provide an affordance that the other two platforms do not include, that is, the ability of stating whether other people's posts were useful. As I will argue (see Section 5.5), 'liking' other people's reviews constitute a form of alignment online.

Another aspect I discussed involved the methodological choices I made in terms of sampling, collecting, and selecting the data. For the data sampling, I decided in favour of sampling by theme (Herring, 2004) or topic (Page *et al*., 2014), as well as by time (Herring, 2004). Still, a specific topic and timeframe were needed for the data collection; in this case, my initial observations of the sites allowed me to notice a similarity between discussions on HiFi Chile (*Qué películas viste recientemente?'*) and IMDb (*Which films did you see last week*'). Although there is not a similar discussion

on Netflix, this sense of recency was also present on its *New releases* category, which was thus incorporated to the data collection. Between July and December 2015, I collected 1,800 posts for the corpus of reviews on these sites. As noted, I experienced a setback when I realised that IMDb erased its discussions after a while, so I lost weeks of sequences of discussions, but I was able to collect 600 posts and add them to the corpus by December. Furthermore, the 22 posts I had managed to store from the deleted discussions were added to the coding scheme, which is why it contains 1,822 posts.

I also discussed why I adopt a mixed-method approach, which combines the application of ethnographic principles, corpus linguistics, coding, and narrative analysis. As I argue, this mixture allows for both a top-down and a bottom-up approach towards the analysis of the data: while there are certain top-down aspects that corpus linguistics, for instance, can yield, such as keywords, collocations, etc. (see Chapter 4), a more contextual perspective such as the insights provided by drawing on ethnographic principles or narrative analysis (see Chapters 5 and 6) can make the analysis richer and multi-layered. Furthermore, the combination of methods will depend on the specific subject analysed in each chapter. In this way, in Chapter 4 I use corpus linguistics and coding to examine the lexico-grammatical choices and discourse-level evaluation strategies in the data, and in Chapter 5 I employ corpus linguistics, coding, and I draw on ethnographic principles to study how users reference genres as a way to construct and negotiate their expertise. In Chapter 6 I utilise narrative analysis, coding, and the application of ethnographic principles in order to explore the ways in which personal narratives of film-watching experiences shed light on the reviewers' familiarity with certain movies.

Finally, I provided the ethical considerations that I kept in mind for the analysis of the data. I began this overview by stressing how making decisions on an ethical level within digital communication is a deeply contextual process, as there is no rule of thumb that researchers can apply to every scenario. I discussed the different points of view that scholars have taken in terms of what makes data public or private, as well as how there can be certain topics that people post about online which may be more sensitive than others. I argued that if we follow Page *et al.*'s (2014) classification of which issues are indeed sensitive (i.e., health, sexuality, religion, and politics), none of them are prominent in my data. Furthermore, I provided a summary of Bruckman's (2002) classification of four degrees of disguise when researchers report their findings, i.e., 'no disguise', 'light disguise', 'moderate disguise' and 'heavy disguise'. Subsequently, I

argued in favour of the ‘light disguise’ option; the reason behind this decision is that this alternative seems to offer more balance in terms of protecting the participants, on the one hand, but also being able to use the data verbatim for the analysis, on the other.

The next chapters —Chapters 4, 5 and 6— will explore different aspects of the data analysis.

Chapter 4: Lexico-grammatical and discourse level evaluation strategies

4.1 Introduction

As noted in Section 2.2.3, by looking at online reviews, this thesis deals mostly with users offering their evaluations of films. Analysing evaluations from a linguistic standpoint can be challenging not only because evaluation has been looked at from different theoretical perspectives (again, see Section 2.2.3), but also, from a more practical standpoint, because of the different lexical, syntactic, orthographic, and discursive elements it involves (Vásquez, 2014a). In this sense, I will concentrate on the notion of stance, as it will afford me the possibility of applying Biber's (2006) list of features for its study, as well as his typology, incorporating epistemic, attitudinal, and stylistic stances. Even though examining evaluations —whether offline or online— can be complex, previous research has produced some general conclusions, such as online reviews having a tendency to be positive rather than negative (Hu, Zhang & Pavlou, 2009; Kuehn, 2011), even pointing out how users do their best not to appear too critical (Kuehn, 2011; Vásquez, 2011).

The research question I intend to answer in this chapter, therefore, is:

What are the most common linguistic resources that users employ when they share their evaluations of films?

In order to detect patterns in my own data, this first analytical chapter incorporates both a top-down and a bottom-up approach. Thus, I will look at quantitative and qualitative patterns of language use on the three sites, through the combination of findings from the corpus linguistic analysis and coding results for the *Discourse-level evaluation strategies* category (see Section 3.6.3). With corpus linguistics, my intention is to give an overview of the language choices on the three sites, as well as to identify certain features that could work as signposts for a more detailed analysis in later chapters (i.e., Chapters 5 and 6). This approach, of course, is not purely quantitative: some of these steps, such as obtaining concordance lines, represent a qualitative viewpoint within corpus linguistics (Ensslin & Johnson, 2006), as they give us a glimpse into the context in which particular terms occurred. In addition, the results obtained through the coding

process involve patterns of evaluation that go beyond "the word or phrase level" (Vásquez, 2014a: 44) and entail occurrences such as the use of slang and interjections.

In Section 4.2, I look at the most frequent media and tones (see Section 3.6.3) with which these reviews are written. In Section 4.3, I focus on the words that occur most frequently in the data. Section 4.3 then consists of an exploration of the most significant keywords when compared to reference corpora in English and Spanish. In Section 4.4, I examine these keywords from the point of view of collocation. In Section 4.5, I discuss the epistemic, attitudinal, and stylistic stances that users utilise most frequently. Section 4.6 then focuses on the aforementioned *Discourse-level evaluation strategies*. Finally, Section 4.7 offers concluding remarks, as well as projections as to how these findings will be further investigated in Chapters 5 and 6.

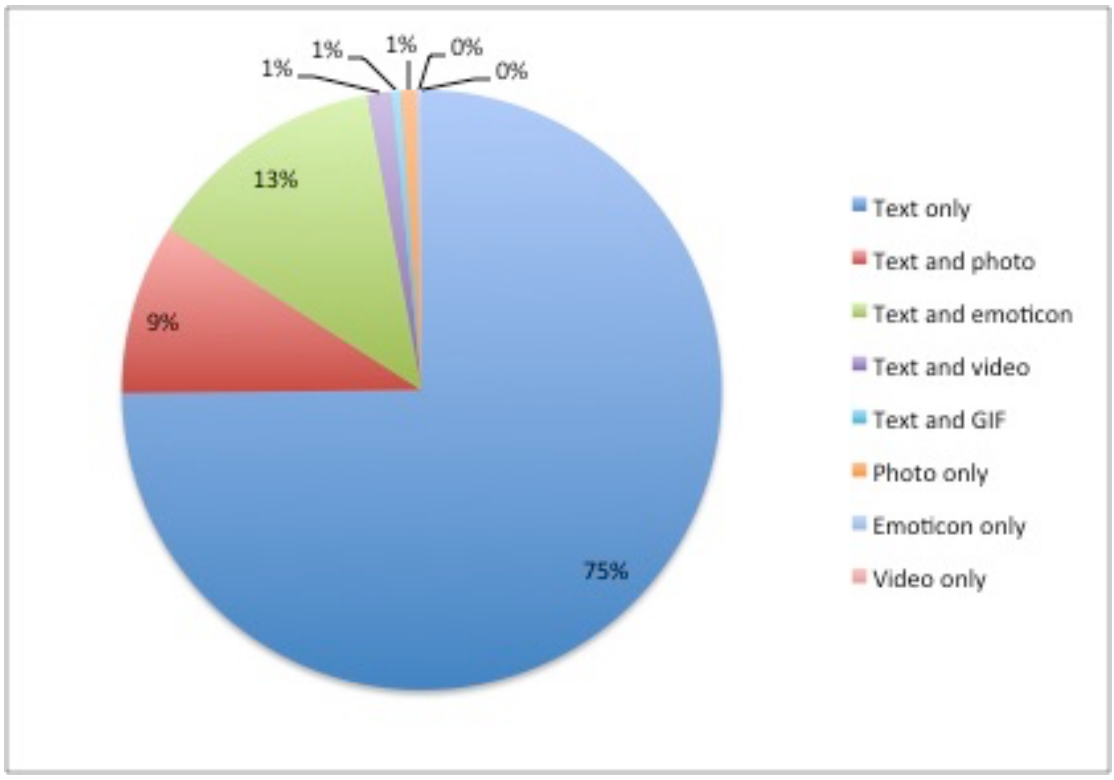
As noted, examining evaluation resources in terms of their frequency, as well as their salience when compared with reference corpora, sheds light on the aspects that will deserve a closer, fine-grained look in Chapter 5 and 6. The issues that gain prominence through the analysis in this chapter are the saliency of keywords and collocations that are used either to refer to specific cinematic genres or to the activity of watching films repeatedly. Furthermore, these two elements tend to be intertwined with various allusions to time. These findings offer insights into the ways in which users show how much they know about cinema, whether it is through demonstrating their familiarity with specific type of films, the discoveries they have made about a certain movie after watching it more than once, or their tendency to recommend others when it is the best time to watch a particular film.

4.2 Medium and tone

The aim of this section is to provide an overview of the extent to which the posts in the data combine text with semiotic means, as well as whether the dominant tone of the messages is confrontational or nonconfrontational. Since this chapter provides a top-down approach to the reviews on the three sites, analysing these issues offers more details regarding the main characteristics of these evaluations, in terms of both their format and their tone.

One of the coding categories employed by De Fina (2016) that I adopted in this thesis (see Section 3.6.3) is *Medium*, i.e., whether the posts consist of text exclusively or whether they are accompanied (or even replaced) by features such as photos, videos, etc. Figure 4.1 shows a clear prominence of posts that only contain text out of the 1,822 reviews I coded, with posts including emoticons and photos coming in at a very distant second and third place, respectively.

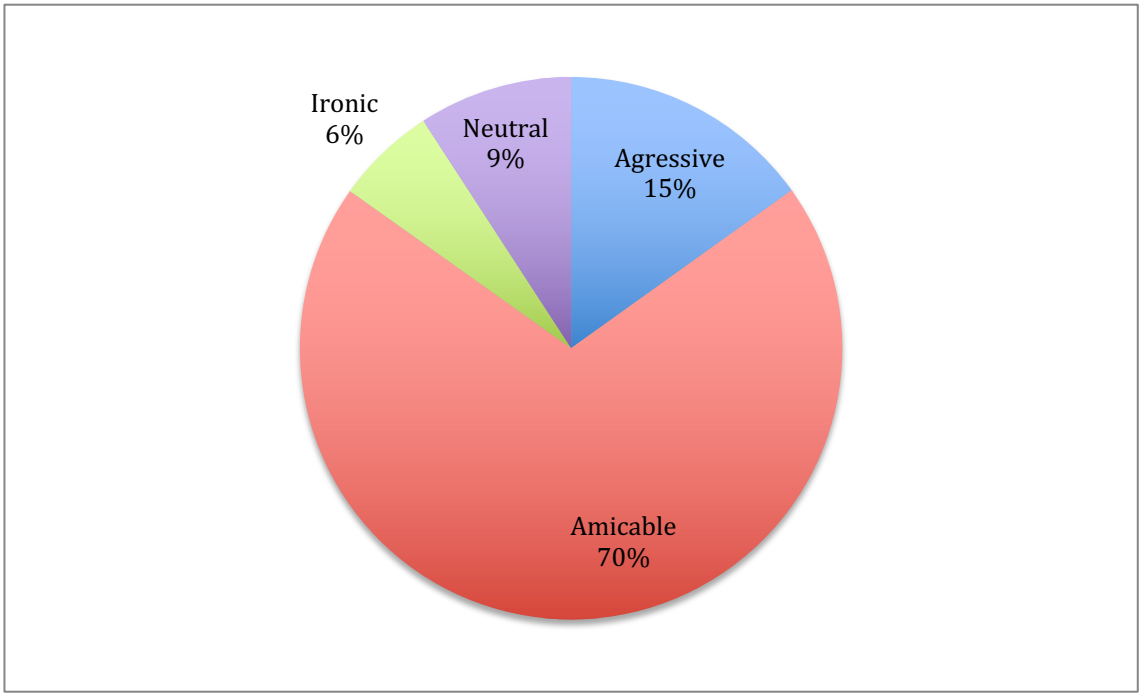
Figure 4.1 Coding results for *Medium*



In the case of *Tone*, there is a noticeable saliency of posts that are categorised as *Amicable*, with reviews coded as *Aggressive* occupying a very distant second place, and posts coded as *Neutral* and *Ironic* further behind in third and fourth place, respectively, as shown in Figure 4.2. Even though I addressed this caveat when I provided my coding scheme (see Section 3.6.3), I should reiterate that coding for tone can be a difficult endeavour, as not all posts are clearly aggressive, amicable, ironic or neutral. While there were several instances throughout the coding process where I was indeed unsure with regard to the tone of a particular post, aggressive comments were the easiest to distinguish, as they included derogatory views (e.g., insults, cuss words, etc.) on

specific persons or groups of people who did not share the opinion of the reviewer at hand, as well as on the films themselves. On the other end of the spectrum, amicable posts tended to involve a combination of greetings, praise, interjections and emoticons along with the text itself. On a more general level, it is important to keep in mind that two of the three communities in the data encompass people who, in some cases, have been sharing their views with one another for years, which results in a sense of familiarity and conviviality in the way they interact.

Figure 4.2 Coding results for *Tone*



Remarkably, the results of the coding process for *Tone* are very different than the findings of De Fina (2016), on which —as noted— I based this coding system. In De Fina's study of audience reactions to an online story, the sum of aggressive and ironic comments represented more than half of the data, which does not happen here. I will provide examples of posts that convey all these different tones throughout the remaining analytical chapters, but at this point it seems relevant to stress again that around a third of the posts coded as *Neutral* consisted solely of IMDb users providing the titles of the films they have seen and a corresponding mark between 0 and 10. Since, on these posts there is only a numerical evaluation of the film, this makes it impossible for those

reviews to be amicable, aggressive or ironic. As mentioned, in the next two chapters I will delve into instances of amicable, aggressive and ironic exchanges between the participants, with a particular focus on the first scenario, due to its saliency.

In the next section I will concentrate on the words that are used most frequently on these sites, an issue whose relevance gained more strength after I was able to observe the prominence of 'Text only' posts in the data.

4.3 Frequency

Bearing in mind how frequency lists have been described as a good starting point for analysing corpora (Baker, 2006), I decided to begin the corpus linguistic analysis by looking at this aspect of the data. With the help of the software *Sketch Engine*, a list of the most frequent words was obtained for each corpus. However, as Evison (2010) maintains, the fact that this is quite a basic process usually means that the results include tokens that "may or not may not be words in the traditional sense" (p. 125) such as vocalisations. In my data, for instance, a token was *www*, which is unsurprising if we consider the nature of these posts.

This raises the question as to whether some of the results of the corpus linguistic analysis should be filtered. With this possibility in mind, I decided to use a list of stopwords (in English for IMDb and in Spanish for the other two corpora) in order to clear grammatical or function words such as pronouns, prepositions, conjunctions (e.g., *y* [and], *o* [or], *pero* [but], etc.) and determiners (such as articles, e.g., *el* [the] and possessives, e.g., *mío* [my]). Even though these items fulfil the much-needed function of connecting "texts together by supplying grammatical information to a lexical warp of nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs" (Scott & Tribble, 2006: 23-24), prioritising verbs, adverbs, nouns and adjectives allowed me to get a better idea "of *discourses* within the corpus" (Baker, 2006: 54; *emphasis in original*), that is, the possible patterns that may arise in terms of the types of adverbs, adjectives, etc. that are used within a particular corpus.

Another important issue in obtaining the most frequent words in the data is related to spelling mistakes. Laboreiro *et al* (2010) propose to correct frequent misspellings made

by users in order to properly count them as tokens, i.e., units of processing, a recommendation I followed.

Even though I have already concentrated on the description of how the corpora were built (see Section 3.5), it is important to reiterate their size: while the IMDb corpus consists of 97,245 words, Netflix LATAM contains 19,813 words and HiFi Chile, 17,815 words. As can be seen, the IMDb corpus is considerably larger than the other two. Indeed, the entries on that site tend to be significantly longer than on Netflix and HiFi Chile, where —as already stated— some posts merely consist of a couple of words or even just an image. Consequently, I will not delve much into statistical comparisons between the three platforms, but it remains illustrative to place them side by side, so as to get a general idea of the most common linguistic features they present.

Moving to the actual findings, the words *film* and *película* [*film*] are within the most frequent in all three corpora. This finding is to be expected since it is a concept that is directly related to subject under discussion (Baker, 2006: 123-124), which is why I decided to filter it out and concentrate on other items. In this sense, and anchoring the focus on the construction of 'expert' identities, we can observe other nouns in Table 4.1 (e.g., *story*, *characters* etc.), various verbs (*watch*, *recommend*, etc.), and adjectives (*good, buena*, *excelente,* etc.). The prominence of adjectives should not come as a surprise since they are one of the most frequent options when it comes to offering evaluations (Hunston & Sinclair, 2000).

Table 4.1 Top 10 items in a simple word count for all three sites, with frequencies in parentheses

IMDb	**Netflix LATAM**	**HiFi Chile**
1) good (390)	1) buena [*good*] (154)	1) buena [*good*] (151)
2) great (291)	2) entretenida [*entertaining*] (90)	2) vi [*watched*] (122)
3) time (250)	3) mejor [*best*/*better*] (88)	3) ver [*watch*] (69)
4) story [219]	4) historia [*story*] (82)	4) cine [*cinema*] (48)
5) love (190)	5) ver [*watch*] (79)	5) historia [*story*] (48)
6) watch (174)	6) final [*ending*] (69)	6) peli [*flick*] (41)
7) man (149)	7) excelente [*excellent*] (67)	7) entretenida [*entertaining*] (39)

8) characters (139)	8) mala [*bad*] (64)	8) mala [*bad*] (38)
9) rewatch (134)	9) recomiendo [*recommend*] (51)	9) recomendable [*recommendable*] (38)
10) drama (132)	10) comedia [*comedy*] (50)	10) encontré [*thought*/*found*] (35)

In the following section, I will compare these findings to reference corpora, both in English and Spanish.

4.4 Keywords

A keyword is "a word which occurs with unusual high frequency in a given text" (Scott, 1997: 236) when compared with a given reference corpus. Moreover, keywords represent useful signposts, in the sense that they pinpoint the lexical focus of a corpus (Baker, 2010: 26). Even though analysing both Spanish and English online data is one of the contributions I aim to make with this research, it also posed certain limitations from a methodological standpoint. For instance, there is not a wide variety of reference corpora in Spanish that gathers online texts, which meant that my options in this regard were limited. However, the aforementioned software *Sketch Engine* does offer built-in reference corpora in different languages. Specifically, I employed the reference corpus *American Spanish Web 2011 (esamTenTen11, Freeling v4),* which consists of nearly 7 billion words, and includes online data from Argentina, Mexico, Chile, Colombia, Peru, Venezuela, Cuba, Uruguay, etc. I also used the reference corpus *English Web 2013 (enTenTen13)*, which contains around 19 billion words.[24]

One of the crucial aspects of obtaining keywords is how they are calculated. In the case of *Sketch Engine*, and as explained on the website itself, it follows the method known as simple math, which contains a variable that makes it possible to concentrate on words that occur with either a high or low level of frequency. The statistic they use is a variant on "word W is so-and-so times more frequent in corpus X than corpus Y" ("Simple Math", 2016).

[24] Both the *American Spanish Web 2011* and the *English Web 2013* are TenTen corpora: they are created by web crawling and later processed, thereby removing content such as advertisements, links, etc., as well as duplicate parts.

The simple maths parameter on *Sketch Engine* is set by default at N=1, which is how it has been since changing from N=100 after an update of the interface. Having this parameter set to 1 means that the terms used more rarely when compared to the reference corpus will appear at the top of the keyword list, whereas the most frequently used would be seen first if it were set at 100 (Kilgarriff, 2009).

Another important aspect is the corpus attribute that is going to be prioritised for the actual extraction: the available options for this are 'word' (searching for one word form and not other forms of the same term), 'lc' (which counts all instances in which a word is found both in uppercase and lowercase, and is also the default parameter that *Sketch Engine* uses), 'lemma' (this option includes all forms of the word in the result), and 'lemma_lc' (same as the previous alternative, but also case insensitive). Even though concentrating on lemmas would have allowed me to encapsulate the different variations of a specific term, I kept in mind that certain word forms can have particular senses or collocations that could be lost by combining those word forms (Stubbs, 2001).

Other alternatives include the aforementioned simple maths parameter number; the possibility of excluding stopwords (as noted, I had already chosen to use them); the option of only extracting terms that consist of alphanumeric characters; the alternative of only selecting terms that contain at least one alphabetic character; setting a minimal word frequency; a maximum number of keywords to be extracted; a term reference corpus and a maximum number of terms to be obtained.

Ultimately, I left several of these parameters as they were set by default. Thus, *English Web 2013 (enTenTen13)* and *American Spanish Web 2011 (esamTenTen11, Freeling v4)* were kept as the reference corpora for the respective languages; the corpus attribute for the keyword extraction remained at 'lc'; the simple maths number was kept at 1; stopwords were not excluded; words that consisted of at least one alphabetic character were included; and the maximum number of keywords, as well as terms, to be extracted was set at 100. With regard to the maximum of keywords, although it was left at 100, I will only show the 10 top keywords and multi-keywords for each corpora due to reasons of space and to the fact that, in Section 4.4, I will focus on them from a collocation standpoint.

By not altering most of the default settings that *Sketch Engine* provides, my intention was to reduce researcher bias. In other words, I stuck to the results that the software

yielded as opposed to trying out different formulas that could have potentially led me to what I was expecting to find. Nonetheless, some modifications were carried out: I increased the minimum word frequency from 1 to 2 so as to narrow down the results, and the terms reference corpus for the multi-word extraction was changed from the British National Corpus to the same corpus I used for the single keyword extraction, *English Web 2013 (enTenTen13)*. *Sketch Engine* allows its users to extract not only single keywords, but multi-words as well, so both were obtained for my corpora.

4.4.1. **Single keywords**

Moving to the keywords themselves, Table 4.2 shows the top ten that can be found in the IMDb corpus. Aside from proper nouns that receive a high degree of keyness because they are either film titles or the names of actors, directors, etc., the word that is assigned the highest keyness is *rewatch*. Other occurrences that clearly refer to the same thing, e.g., its plural form, *rewatches*, can be seen as well. Furthermore, the third highest keyword, *viewings*, alludes to that very phenomenon of seeing films repeatedly. I will come back to this issue later in this chapter, as well as the subsequent ones, but for now, it is important to state that this practice of watching films more than once opens up different analytical avenues, which not only have to do with the discursive construction and negotiation of expert identities, but also with cultural and temporal aspects of these users' lives.

As an initial form of analysis, before concentrating on concordances and collocations, a strategy that has been described as useful when it comes to keywords is to gather them into semantic groups (Baker, 2006, 2010). As Table 4.2 indicates, there are, on the one hand, different conjugations of a verb that allude to watching a film repeatedly (*rewatch, rewatched*) and nouns that indicate the same act (*viewings*, *rewatches*). On the other hand, there are nouns that refer to cinematic genres (*thriller*, *comedies*, and *sci*, which is one half of *sci fi*). The two keywords left are *masterpiece*, which —as I shall show in Section 4.4, co-occurs significantly with the word *genre*— and *watchlist*, which does not really fit into either of these groups, but does provide information about users' preferences

Table 4.2 Top 10 keywords generated by comparing IMDb corpus to reference corpus *English Web 2013*

Word	*Score* (*keyness*)	*Frequency*
1) rewatch	939.11	134
2) cinematography	188.85	53
3) viewings	183.33	35
4) rewatches	174.69	22
5) thriller	76.36	52
6) rewatched	68.18	9
7) sci	62.27	23
8) masterpiece	59.14	45
9) comedies	58.82	18
10) watchlist	58.36	14

Moving to the Netflix LATAM corpus in Table 4,3, there is a majority of adjectives. Among them, we can see more negative connotations such as *aburrida* [*boring*], *malísima* [*awful*], *predecible* [*predictable*], *pésima* [*dreadful*] than their sole positive counterpart, *entretenida* [*entertaining*]. There are also verbs that reference the act of watching a film, in the form of the imperative *véanla* [*watch it*], which functions as a type of recommendation, and *viéndola* [*watching it*]. In a similar vein, we find two other verbs, *reí* [*laughed*], which alludes to a reaction that the film caused in the reviewer, and *actuada* [*acted*], which is used to evaluate actors' performances. Finally, *romántica* [*romantic*] constitutes another reference to genre: as I will maintain in Section 4.4, it co-occurs significantly with *comedia* [*comedy*], thus signalling a popular genre within Hollywood.

Table 4.3 Top 10 keywords generated by comparing Netflix LATAM corpus to reference corpus *American Spanish Web 2011*

Word	*Score* (*keyness*)	*Frequency*
1) aburrida [*boring*]	416.29	35
2) véanla [*watch it*]	394.47	10
3) malísima [*awful*]	361.64	11
4) entretenida [*entertaining*]	352.85	42
5) predecible [*predictable*]	254.35	15
6) actuada [*acted*]	242.67	7
7) viéndola [*watching it*]	223.98	7
8) romántica [*romantic*]	200.73	28
9) pésima [*dreadful*]	186.39	18
10) reí [*laughed*]	185.83	8

The HiFi Chile corpus also presents a variety of adjectives, although most of them consist of slang terms, e.g., two variations of *buena* [*good*], and the word *penca* [*bad*], as Table 4.4 shows. The highest scoring keyword is another adjective, *entretenida* [*entertaining*], which was also a keyword in the Netflix corpora. Similarly, the verb *entretuvo* [*entertained*] alludes to the same positive film-watching experience. Speaking of film-watching experiences and keywords that appear in both Spanish-speaking corpora, *viéndola* [*watching it*] is present here as well, as a verb that is used by users to tell others what happened to them *while* they were seeing the movie.

Another verb, *guatea* [*disappoints*], joints the list of slang terms, as well as *descomprar*, which is a combination of *descargar* [*download*] and *comprar* [*buy*] - in other words, it is a creative way by which HiFi Chile users acknowledge that they downloaded a film from the internet, while at the same time joking around the fact that they did not waste any money in doing so.

Finally, there are two nouns: *fomingo* and *peli*, which is short for *película.* I translated the latter as *flick*, since it is the only informal way of referring to films in English I could find. As for *fomingo*, it is a Chilean slang term that combines the words *fome* [*boring*] and *domingo* [*Sunday*] ("Fomingo", 2014). Much in the same way as *aburrida*

in the previous table, *fome* conveys boredom. Moreover, although *fome* and *aburrido/a* both mean the same, *fome* is a local Chilean word, whereas *aburrido/a* is used in several Spanish-speaking countries.

Table 4.4 Top 10 keywords generated by comparing HiFi Chile corpus to reference corpus *American Spanish Web 2011*

Word	*Score* (*keyness*)	*Frequency*
1) entretenida [*entertaining*]	326.50	36
2) guatea [*disappoints*]	321.20	7
3) wena [*good*]	316.64	11
4) penca [*bad*]	284.90	10
5) fomingo [*boring* + *Sunday*]	276.79	6
6) wuena [*good*]	274.99	6
7) entretuvo [*entertained*]	255.51	7
8) peli [*flick*]	233.44	41
9) descomprar [*download* + *buy*]	233.39	5
10) viéndola [*watching it*]	207.31	6

In the next section, I focus on the multi-keywords in the data.

4.4.2. Multi-keywords

In contrast to my previous approach, I did not apply a list of stopwords when it came to obtaining multi-keywords, since the focus now is —and will be in Section 4.5— on co-occurrences of terms and not on single words. Thus, I did not want to filter out potential combinations between grammatical and lexical words. This also means that *película* [*film*] was incorporated into the analysis of multi-keywords, as I did not want to leave out findings such as *tipo de películas* [*type of films*], which go beyond the prominence of the noun by itself.

As can be seen in Table 4.5, at the level of multi-keywords there is also a significant saliency of references to genre on IMDb. Even though this prominence is certainly

worth exploring further, a more contextual approach to this issue will be applied elsewhere (see Chapter 5).

Table 4.5 Top 10 multi-keywords generated by comparing IMDb corpus to reference corpus *English Web 2013*

Multi-word	*Score* (*keyness*)	*Frequency*
1) sci fi	110.04	15
2) first watch	109.04	15
3) great film	89.83	15
4) war drama	78.27	10
5) action movie	71.28	13
6) horror movie	63.77	14
7) crime drama	61.59	9
8) time viewing	55.24	7
9) superb form	54.97	7
10) online stuff	54.18	7

Genre is also salient on Netflix LATAM from the point of view of multi-keywords, as Table 4.6 indicates. Other results featured in this table may be unusually frequent when compared to the reference corpus, but are quite common for a corpus of film reviews, such as the combination of *esta* [*this*] and *película* [*film*]; the references to the noun *saga*, preceded by the article *la* [*the*]; describing a film as *súper recomendable* [*super recommendable*]; or the way in which the movie depicts *amor verdadero* [*true love*].

Table 4.6 Top 10 multi-keywords generated by comparing Netflix LATAM corpus to reference corpus *American Spanish Web 2011*

Multi-word	*Score* (*keyness*)	*Frequency*
1) películas de terror [*horror films*]	308.81	9
2) súper recomendable [*super recommendable*]	294.42	7
3) película de terror [*horror film*]	289.81	10
4) comedia romántica [*romantic comedy*]	273.85	11
5) película romántica [*romantic film*]	166.55	4
6) excelente documental [*excellent documentary*]	130.16	3
7) esta película [*this film*]	128.49	3
8) amor verdadero [*true love*]	120.79	4
9) terror psicológico [*psychological horror*]	120.41	3
10) la saga [*the saga*]	117.47	3

Similarly to what happened with the table of single keywords in the HiFi Chile corpus, slang terms are present in Table 4.7 too: the multi-keyword with the highest score is the repetition of *wena* [*good*]. Another informal word, the concept of *fomingo* appears again, this time accompanied by the noun *tarde* [*afternoon*] (and the preposition *de* [*of*], although a translation into English would not include this last element). As I will argue in Section 4.4, the notion of time materialises in different ways in the data. In the case of *fomingo*, it is used for a specific type of recommendation to watch certain films on a (boring) Sunday.

Much like in the other two lists of multi-keywords, there is a reference to genre in the HiFi Chile corpus, albeit less directly: by using the phrase *tipo de películas* [*type of films*], these users are mentioning a group of films that share the same (or at least similar) characteristics.

A pattern that can be perceived is that some of these multi-keywords are mostly descriptive, e.g., whether a film is available on Netflix, if it is based on a real life story, if the reviewer saw it sitting on the stairs of the cinema, if one of the characters is a small kid, and the kind of topic it deals with, such as neuroscience.

Table 4.7 Top 10 multi-keywords generated by comparing HiFi Chile corpus to reference corpus *American Spanish Web 2011*

Multi-word	*Score (keyness)*	*Frequency*
1) wena wena [*good good*]	186.91	4
2) película de Netflix [*Netflix film*]	140.43	3
3) cabro chico [*young kid*]	122.22	3
4) tipo de películas [*type of films*]	105.91	3
5) historia real [*real story*]	102.98	4
6) escalera del cine [*cinema stairs*]	93.95	2
7) tarde de fomingo [*boring* + *Sunday afternoon*]	93.95	2
8) link porfa [*link please*]	93.95	2
9) temas de neurociencia [*neuroscience topics*]	93.95	2
10) puta la película buena [*what a great f*ckin' film*]	93.95	2

Thus far, I have given an overview of the keywords in the data. As noted, I will go back to several of these multi-keywords (see Chapter 5), but I will explore single keywords further in the next section, which will focus on their collocates, as well as displaying concordance lines in order to show the context in which they co-occur. By looking at concordances as well as collocations, my intention is to unpack the particular discourses that these keywords seem to shape (Ensslin & Johnson, 2006). As I will argue, the findings yield two main patterns, both related to constructions of expertise: the user's familiarity with specific cinematic genres, on the one hand, and their (sometimes repeated) experiences of watching specific films, on the other.

4.5 Collocates

Collocation is the "statistical tendency of words to co-occur" (Hunston, 2002: 12). The fact that it deals with a *statistical* tendency is important, since *Sketch Engine* provides different alternatives to obtain collocation scores: T-score, MI, MI3, log likelihood,

minimum sensitivity, logDice, and MI.log_f.[25] However, among these various possibilities, logDice has been the default option when it comes to showing the collocations with the highest scores since September 2006, after it replaced the modified version of MI score that had been employed until that date. An important aspect of logDice is that it is based on the Dice coefficient, which "generally reveals more frequent lexical collocates" (Baker, 2010: 25). This emphasis on lexical collocation coincides with my intention to concentrate on lexical —as opposed to grammatical— patterns, as stated in Section 4.3.[26]

There are a few other default settings involved in the process of obtaining collocates: the attribute one focuses on, the range the search encompasses, the minimum frequency the collocate needs to have in the corpus, and the minimum frequency in the range selected. I will go into detail about the selected range in the paragraph below, but the minimum frequency in this range was not altered, which means that it was left at three occurrences. Another aspect I did not modify was the minimum frequency that the word needed to have in the corpus, which remained at five. A feature I did alter was the attribute, which was changed from 'word' (that is, counting instances of a word form separately depending on whether it starts with lowercase of uppercase) to 'word (lowercase)', which does not make a difference between upper or lowercase, thereby grouping these instances together.

Regarding the range of the collocation, the default setting is for it to be five spaces to the left and five spaces to the right of the word at hand. However, I have drawn on Hunston's (2002: 77-79) recommendation in terms of obtaining clues as to the dominant phraseology of a word. Hunston suggests arranging one column of the most significant collocates of a particular word both to the left and right, i.e., the most significant collocates one space to the left, two spaces to the left, and so on, doing the same to the right afterwards (see Appendix B).

As noted, if we look at the keywords identified from tables 4.2 to 4.4, there are two patterns that come to the fore, both in Spanish and English. On the one hand, there is a prominence of various conjugations of the verb *watch* —or, more specifically,

[25] Another option that *Sketch Engine* provides is the ability to obtain words sketches, which are one-page summaries of a word's grammatical and collocational behaviour. Thus, it can show which other terms modify the word we are focusing on, the verbs that co-ccour with that word as object or as subject, etc. Unfortunately, this function only works properly with corpora in English, which is why I decided against using it for my analysis.

[26] See Richlý (2008) for more information on logDice.

rewatch— to which we could add the noun *viewings*. On the other, there are several nouns that are used to reference particular cinematic genres, such as *comedies*, *thriller*, *romántica*, etc. I will now focus on examples of these two patterns (but see Appendix B for the full collocations for the top 10 keywords in each corpus).

4.5.1 *Rewatch*

If we look at the highest-scoring keyword in the IMDb corpus, *rewatch*, *recent* is the most significant word immediately to its left —that is, the one closer to the arrow with the highest logDice score in Appendix B—, as well as the most significant word that occurs two places to the left. The same thing happens three, four, and five places to the left of the keyword. On the other hand, if we look at the most significant collocate immediately to the right of *rewatch*, the result is *it*; two places to the right, its most significant collocate is *I*; and then *trilogy* is the most significant collocate three, four, and five places to the right.

Hunston (2002) recommends yielding concordance lines to check the assumptions made while analysing. Following this advice, Figure 4.3 shows all the instances in which *recent* collocates with *rewatch* to its left.[27] Lines 1 to 4 indicate how users' opinions can change after going back and seeing a film again. As a matter of fact, line 2 is the only instance where a reviewer's take on a movie does not get more negative (there was not enough space for it, but in line 1, the participant states that his/her appreciation for the film decreased after the rewatch). However, as we shall see, liking a film less after repeated viewings is not always the case in the data.

Figure 4.3 Concordance lines for *rewatch* collocating with *recent*

1	in my appreciation after a **recent rewatch** . Just like 'Rashomon', incidentally
2	It held up very well on a **recent rewatch** . I have been meaning to see more from
3	forty years on. On a **recent rewatch** I liked Return of the Jedi even less

[27] Unless stated otherwise, all the collocations and concordance provided in the data constitute all the occurrences in a given corpus. When this is not the case, I will clarify that I am showing *selected* concordance lines.

4	I liked a bit less on a **recent**	**rewatch** but it is still a fitting conclusion to

If we look at the most significant collocate to the right of *rewatch*, *trilogy*, in Figure 4.4, we can see a rather straightforward use of this word: in Line 1, it is employed to refer to *The Lord of the Rings* saga, whereas in lines 2 and 3, the same user talks about his/her habit of rewatching the original *Star Wars* trilogy every year. The importance of lines 2 and 3 is that they offer another insight into the prevalence of stories revolving around users' experiences and customs when it comes to watching movies, something I will focus on in Chapter 6.

Figure 4.4 Concordance lines for *rewatch* collocating with *trilogy*

1		**Rewatch**	: LOTR **TRILOGY** – all 10/10
2	Star Wars Trilogy (1977-1983)– 9.5 I	**rewatch**	the original **trilogy** every year and it's
3	the better movie out of the prequels. I	**rewatch**	the original **trilogy** at least once a year

The next keyword I explore, *Viewings*, also belongs to this pattern of keywords that relate to reviewers writing about films they have watched more than once.

4.4.2 *Viewings*

In the IMDb corpus, *viewings* collocates significantly with *subsequent* to the left and *past* to the right. As opposed to what happens in Figure 4.3, the collocation between *viewings* and *subsequent* presented in Figure 4.5 shows mostly instances in which the appreciation for a film grows *on subsequent viewings*, although to different levels (the user in line 2 acknowledges that the level of appreciation has only grown *slightly*). Conversely, in line 4, this user expresses a degree of fear to revisit the first instalment of *The Hangover* saga. Thus, it is not an assertion that it will not live up to subsequent viewings, but a concern about it.

Figure 4.5 Concordance lines for *viewings* collocating with *subsequent*

1	years back but after	**subsequent viewings**	I pretty much love it.
2	to them. On	**Subsequent viewings**	it has grown on me slightly
3	I warmed to it on	**subsequent viewings**	. It has a very down to earth
4	it will not live up to	**subsequent viewings**	.

Taking into account its semantic similarity to *subsequent*, I also obtained concordance lines for the collocation between *viewings* and *repeat.* Accordingly, Figure 4.6 presents a somewhat related scenario, particularly in line 3, where there is an acknowledgement of a increasing appreciation *on repeat viewings*.

Figure 4.6 Concordance lines for *viewings* collocating with *repeat*

1	I enjoyed it though.	**Repeat viewings**	: Mad Max: Fury Road 10/10
2	score. Benefit from	**repeat viewings**	possibly but I was entertained
3	appreciating it more on	**repeat viewings**	. It's a simple story that is elevated
4	think it lends itself to	**repeat viewings**	?

To the right of *viewings*, the most recurrent significant collocate is *past*. As it has already happened with *repeat*, some collocates can be related to mere announcements of what people have seen. Such is the case for the other significant words to the right of *viewings*, i.e., *week*, and *this*, which can all be seen in Figure 4.7. Additionally, this is a case where the recurrence of specific language choices displayed by one particular user tilts the balance in terms of collocation. Consequently, this particular finding is not really illustrative from the point of view of an overall discursive construction of expertise built by a wide array of users, but it is still pertinent to point out why it happens frequently enough to have a high logDice score. It is also important to point out that the phrase 'My viewings this past week' is a way of responding to the question that brings these users together, that is, *Which films did you see last week?*

Figure 4.7 Concordance lines for *viewings* collocating with *past*

1	My **viewings** this **past** week: Bridge of Spies (2015,
2	My **viewings** this **past** week: The Hunger Games:
3	My **viewings** this **past** week: Lost River (2014, Ryan
4	My **viewings** this **past** week: The Salt of the Earth (
5	My **viewings** this **past** week: The Lego Movie (2014,
6	My **viewings** this **past** week: The Salt of the Earth (

The next keyword, *rewatches*, is yet another example of participants discussing multiple-viewings of a film.

4.5.3 *Rewatches*

The most significant collocates of *rewatches*, both to the left and right, are either prepositions or articles. As Figure 4.8 indicates, and similar to what has been already shown, the act of watching something again can allow users to appreciate a film even more (line 2) or to discover new aspects about it (lines 1 and 3).

Figure 4.8 Concordance lines for *rewatches* collocating with *on*

1	many other things to discover **on** **rewatches** . Do you have that kind of dubbing
2	Terry Gilliam) Gets better **on** **rewatches** . – Heavenly Creatures (1994, Peter
3	many other things to discover **on** **rewatches** . Easily my favourite Pixar, which says

Unfortunately, the collocates to the right of *rewatches* do not tell us much about the context around this keyword: both the article *the* and the preposition *of* are largely used to reference film titles, which means that they mostly function as proper nouns, as opposed to what happens with *on rewatches*.

The next collocation I focus on belongs to the other pattern I identified within the keywords in the data: those that reference specific genres.

4.5.4 *Thriller*

This keyword of the IMDb corpus co-occurs significantly with other genres such as *mystery, american*, and *sci fi* to the right. Figure 4.9 allows us to see the ways in which *mystery* is used to the left of *thriller*. In line 1, the film in question is accused of trying to pass as a mystery/thriller when it is really a melodrama, whereas in line 3 we find the opposite case, i.e., this reviewer claims that the movie is *more of a mystery thriller* than the genre to which it supposedly belongs. Line 2 includes a rhetorical question regarding what to call a mystery thriller when the mystery is lacking, while lines 4 and 5 show a familiarity with mystery thrillers from a particular decade, and with this genre as well as action, respectively.

To the right, Appendix B already provides an idea of how *thriller* collocates with opinions where the performances of the actors are praised, without the need to have concordance lines to show that.

Figure 4.9 Concordance lines for *thriller* collocating with *mystery*

1	melodrama marketed as	**mystery** / **thriller**	. IMDb rating is 7.3
2	yes (2015)- What is a	**mystery thriller**	called when the mystery isn't
3	reason when it's more of a	**mystery thriller**	. Joel Edgerton mades a very
4	I would say one of the best	**mystery thriller**	of the 90's. It's a shame that
5	referential, action-y meta	**mystery thriller**	with Gyllenhal on good form

The following keyword is yet another variation of *rewatch*, in this case, *rewatched*, with its corresponding collocates, displayed in Appendix B, mostly consisting of pronouns and an adverb.

4.5.5 *Rewatched*

If we concentrate on all the occurrences of the personal pronoun *I* to the left of *rewatched*, as Figure 4.10 does, we can observe how users' opinion either go from bad to good upon rewatches (lines 1, 3 and 6) or from good to even better (line 2 and 7).

Figure 4.10 Concordance lines for *rewatched* collocating with *I*

1	Blues Brothers when **I** first saw it,	**rewatched**	it a few weeks ago and kind of liked
2	which is a good thing. **I** have	**rewatched**	it a couple of times and like it even
3	a substandard Die Hard movie, but **I**	**rewatched**	it two Christmases ago and realised
4	Coincidentally, **I**	**rewatched**	'Eastern Promises' and 'Lapis' last
5	a coincidence with the fact **I**	**rewatched**	'The Pianist' last year on Christmas
6	Napoleon Dynamite I disliked, **I** only	**rewatched**	it very recently and I found it to be
7	Promises, a film I like a lot and **I**'ve	**rewatched**	several times.

To the right of *rewatches*, its only significant collocate one, two, and three places to the left is *it*. Something I could not include in line 3 of Figure 4.11 below is that this user *had a blast* watching that specific film. Thus, both in line 3 and 4, there is an appreciation of a particular film that is enhanced by rewatching it repeatedly. Furthermore, there is an allusion to Japanese cinema and to a top 50 list, both ways in which fandom and knowledge are shown.

Figure 4.11 Concordance lines for *rewatched* collocating with *it*

1	which is a good thing. I have	**rewatched it**	a couple of times and like it even
2	Blues Brothers when I first saw it,	**rewatched it**	a few weeks ago and kind of liked
3	a masterpiece of Japanese cinema	**Rewatched it**	again fairly recently and had a
4	all in my top 50 of all time	**Rewatched it**	again very recently and loved it.
5	a substandard Die Hard movie, but I	**rewatched it**	two Christmases ago and realised
6	Napoleon Dynamite I disliked, I only	**rewatched it**	very recently and I found it to be

In the case of the keyword *comedies*, Appendix B shows how the co-occurrences are the same to the left and to the right. In this sense, I will not dwell further on its concordances, since the co-occurrences of these words with comedies are quite similar to their collocation with masterpiece, as I will indicate in the next section.

4.5.6 *Masterpiece*

This next keyword is not an actual genre itself, but it collocates with specific genres and with the word *genre* as well. In this way, *masterpiece* collocates to the right mostly with words that enhance the place that particular film has in time (e.g., *ever*, *made*), as well as nouns that also situate it within a given category (*genre*) or within the art form itself (*cinema*). If we obtain a concordance line of the co-occurrences between *made* and *masterpiece* (see Figure 4.12 below) five spaces to the left of *masterpiece*, we also see all the instances in which *ever*, another significant collocate according to the Appendix B, is also present. Furthermore, genre once again is invoked, whether it is through the mention of specific categories (e.g., thrillers in line 1, romantic movies in line 2, animated features in line 3, and comedies in line 5), or through using the word *genre* directly (lines 1 and 2).

Figure 4.12 Concordance lines for *masterpiece* collocating with *made*

1	one of the best thrillers ever	**made** , a **masterpiece**	of the genre. Paths of glory is
2	most romantic movies ever **made** . A	**masterpiece**	of the genre with Bogart and
3	best animated features ever **made** . A	**masterpiece**	from Miyazaki. That said it is only
4	the best sequels ever **made**, as much	**masterpiece**	as the original. It's a shame Coppola
5	comedies ever **made**, Chaplin's	**masterpiece**	. One of the best movies of the 30's

As for the collocates of *masterpiece* to the right, I will not concentrate on the collocation with *genre* not only because, as stated, the next chapter will focus on this issue, but also because Figure 4.12 already showed most of its occurrences to the right of *masterpiece*. In Figure 4.13 below, the films evaluated are deemed masterpieces not

of their genres, but of *cinema*, whether it is cinema in general (lines 1 and 2) or from a particular country (3 and 4).

Figure 4.13 Concordance lines for *masterpiece* collocating with *cinema*

1	great Goddard movie I have seen, a	**masterpiece**	of **cinema** . I am kind of surprised
2	as soon as possible, it's a wonderful	**masterpiece**	of **cinema** that everyone absolutely
3	seem to have been inspired by it . A	**masterpiece**	of Japanese **cinema** .
4	Kurosawa managed to turn it into a	**masterpiece**	of Japanese **cinema** .

If we turn our attention to the Netflix LATAM corpus, the highest-scoring keyword, *boring* [*aburrida*], does not refer directly to either rewatching films or to genres, but some of its collocations allude to the latter.

4.5.7 *Aburrida* [*boring*]

This keyword collocates significantly with *muy* [*very]* to the left and *y* [*and*] to the right. Figure 4.14 shows the collocation between *aburrida* and the intensifier *muy* [*very*]. Both lines 1 and 2 emphasise how the films being reviewed are a waste of space in the catalogue and how watching that movie is a waste of time, a complaint that keeps coming up in the data. Line 3 presents the use of capital letters as a way of further intensifying this user's dislike for the film.

Line 4 questions whether that movie fulfils what a production of the horror genre should do, i.e., be scary, as well as recommending other users not to waste their time watching it, whereas line 8 presents a critique of the movie's plot with relation to its genre (comedy).

Figure 4.14 Concordance lines for *aburrida* [*boring*] collocating with *very* [*muy*]

1		**Muy aburrida**	no vale la pena q ocupe espacio
2	de tiempo ver esta película.	**Muy aburrida**	, sin ideas, sin humor…

3	Horrible, es	**muy aburrida**	y Martha Higareda es el peor
4	MALÍSIMA! Es	**muy aburrida**	, va muy lenta y simplemente no
5	no es que no se entienda es	**muy aburrida**	y 0 terror… muy mala… no pierdan
6	creí que estaría	**muy aburrida**	como otras películas nuevas.
7	Una pena. Una película	**muy aburrida**	. Una historia sin desarrollo ,
8	Linda historia pero	**muy aburrida**	para ser la trama de una comedia

1		***Very boring***	*it isn't worth taking up space*
2	*of time watching the film.*	***Very boring***	*, with no ideas, no humour…*
3	*Horrible, it's*	***very boring***	*and Martha Higareda is the worst*
4	*AWFUL. It's*	***very boring***	*, it's very slow and it simply doesn't*
5	*that one doesn't get it it's*	***very boring***	*and 0 terror… very bad… don't waste your*
6	*I thought it was going to be*	***very boring***	*like other new films.*
7	*A pity. A*	***very boring***	*film. A story without development ,*
8	*Beautiful story but*	***very boring***	*for a comedy plot*

The most significant collocate to the right in Figure 4.15 is the conjunction *y* [*and*], as a way of adding more adjectives to *aburrida* [*boring*] so as to highlight how unsatisfying these users thought a film really was (lines 1, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9). There are some exceptions, such as line 7, where the participant argues that the film was not boring at all, as well as praising the performances. Moreover, the whole review is written in capital letters (line 9), which, as I will argue further in Section 4.7, is used for orthographical emphasis (Neurauter-Kessels, 2011).

Figure 4.15 Concordance lines for *aburrida* [*boring*] collocating with *and* [*y*]

1	no rescatan la película.	**Aburrida**	predecible **y** sobrecargada.
2	no es que no se entienda es muy	**aburrida**	**y** 0 terror… muy mala… no pierdan
3		**aburrida**	**y** boba. Puede entrar en gustos generales
4	los actores son malos, la trama es	**aburrida**	**y** los chistes son malos. Mala, fome, lenta
5	realmente pésimaaaa!!! súper	**aburrida**	**y** los elenco muy sobreactuado
6	Horrible, es muy	**aburrida**	**y** Martha Higareda es el peor
7	EXCELENTE PELÍCULA NADA	**ABURRIDA**	**Y** QUE BUENA ACTUACIÓN

8	Película mala,	**aburrida y**	sobre todo, bastante predecible
9	DA PENA AJENA, LA COSA MÁS	**ABURRIDA Y**	TONTA QUE HE VISTO :(

1	*don't save the film.*	***Boring***	*predictable **and** over the top.*
2	*it isn't that one doesn't get it it's very*	***boring and***	*0 terror… very bad… don't waste your*
3		***boring and***	*silly. It can fit into the general tastes*
4	*the actors are bad, the plot is*	***boring and***	*the jokes are bad. Bad, unfunny, slow*
5	*Really awfuuuul!!! Super*	***boring and***	*the cast is very over the top*
6	*Horrible, it's very*	***boring and***	*Martha Higareda is the worst*
7	*EXCELLENT FILM NOT AT ALL*	***BORING AND***	*WHAT A GOOD PERFORMANCE*
8	*Bad,*	***boring and***	*above all, quite predictable film*
9	*EMBARASSING, THE MOST*	***BORING AND***	*DUMB THING I'VE EVER SEEN :(*

Similar to *aburrida*, another adjective, *malísima* [*awful*], is not directly related to either of the two patterns of keywords I identified, but is used at times to refer to genres.

4.5.8 *Malísima* [*awful*]

Malísima [*awful*] collocates significantly with the conjugation *es* [*is*] of the verb *to be* to the left and the noun *película* [*film*] and, again, *es* to the right. As would be expected, the collocation between *malísima* [*awful*] and *es* [*is*] occurs in reviews where films are being evaluated negatively, as indicated in Figure 4.16. Line 1 includes another mention of genre, relating to how almost all films of that type are awful, according to that user. In line 2, the collocation is used within a warning not to watch that movie, which is emphasised by the presence of the stance adverb *en serio* [*seriously*] (Biber, 2006: 92). In line 3, these two words collocate after the movie in question is harshly appraised as the most stupid thing that user has seen.

Figure 4.16 Concordance lines for *malísima* [*awful*] collocating with *es* [*is*]

1	un verdadero y nefasto churrazo,	**es malísima**	como casi todas las del mismo género
2	no la vean,	**es malísima**	en todo sentido, en serio, me sacrifiqué

3 lo más estúpido que he visto. ! **Es malísima** !

1 *a real and terrible dud,* ***it's awful*** *like almost all from the same genre*
2 *don't watch,* ***it's awful*** *in every sense, seriously, I sacrificed*
3 *the most stupid thing I've seen. !* ***It's awful*** *!*

To the right, *película* [*film*] is simply used as a way of referring to the production at hand, whereas *es* [*is*] occurs in the same way as shown in Figure 4.16, which is why I will not explore them further.

The keyword *predecible* [*predictable*] of the Netflix LATAM corpus is another adjective that can be used to evaluate genres, as I will show below.

4.5.9 *Predecible* [*predictable*]

Much like other adjectives in the data, *predecible* [*predictable*] co-occurs mostly with the verb *ser/ estar* [*to be*] and various conjunctions. At first glance, the most likely assumption when thinking of the co-occurrence of the conjugation *es* [is] of the verb *ser*/*estar* [*to be*] and the adjective *predecible* [*predictable*] would be to venture that a negative aspect of the film is being pointed out - mainly, how easy it is to foresee what is going to happen in terms of its plot. Nonetheless, the concordance lines in Figure 4.17 indicate that this is not always the case. Surprisingly, the lines where the adjective is used to depict films in a negative light (3, 8 and 9) are actually fewer than those where the opposite happens. In lines 1, 2, 5, 6 and 7 there is an acknowledgement about the film being predictable, but all of the users state in different ways how that did not hurt their enjoyment of it. In line 6, a user even alludes to other participants calling that movie boring and subsequently disagrees with that claim. In Line 7, and keeping with the prominence of allusions to genre in the data, this reviewer rhetorically asks which romantic comedy is, in fact, not predictable.

Figure 4.17 Concordance lines for *predecible* [*predictable*] collocating with *es* [*is*]

1	Me gustó, **es** tierna,	**predecible**	pero linda. Los personajes son un tanto
2	La trama **es** sencilla y aunque	**predecible**	vale la pena. Las actuaciones son
3	dejan mucho que desear, la historia **es**	**predecible**	que con solo ver 10 minutos te
4	Es un buen guión porque no **es**	**predecible**	. Además , el actor está guapísimo y
5	que perdieron su tiempo, que **es**	**predecible**	, etc. La película es buena para recostarse
6	Hay quienes dicen que **es**	**predecible**	, pero para nada...
7	y disfruté mucho la película. Sí **es**	**predecible**	, pero qué comedia romántica no lo es?
8	**Es** totalmente	**predecible**	y las actuaciones de los pibes
9	No solo la películas **es** totalmente	**predecible**	y cliché, sino que también es

1	*I liked it, **it's** sweet,*	***predictable***	*but beautiful. The characters are a bit*
2	*The plot **is** simple, and although*	***predictable***	*it's worth it. The performances are*
3	*leave a lot to be desired, the story **is***	***predictable***	*that just by watching 10 minutes you* [28]
4	*it's a good script because it **isn't***	***predictable***	*. Also , the actor is very handsome and*
5	*that they wasted their time, that **it's***	***predictable***	*, etc. The film is good to lie down*
6	*There are some who say **it's***	***predictable***	*, but not at all…*
7	*I enjoyed the film a lot. Yes* **it's**	***predictable***	*, but what romantic comedy isn't?*
8	***It's** totally*	***predictable***	*and the performances from the guys*
9	*Not only **is** the film totally*	***predictable***	*and clichéd, but it also is*

The collocates to the right show a similar scenario, with the conjunctions *pero* [*but*] and *y* [*and*] being the most significant co-occurences with *predecible*. What is more, the majority of their co-occurrences can already be seen in the concordance lines above (lines 1, 6 and 7 for *pero*; 8 and 9 for *y*).

Another keyword in the Netflix LATAM corpus is related to genre, although, in this case, more directly than the previous examples: *romántica* [*romantic*].

[28] The original post is missing an adverb such as *tan* [*so*], which would properly allow this user to make the point that the film is *so* predictable that watching it for 10 minutes is enough to tell how it is going to end.

4.5.10 *Romántica* [*Romantic*]

Romántica collocates most significantly with *comedia* [*comedy*] to the left, which means it is used as another reference to a cinematic genre (*romantic comedy*). To the right, it collocates with a couple of prepositions and the adjective *triste* [*sad*].

Lines 2 and 4 of Figure 4.18, which shows the collocation between *romántica* and *comedia*, provide two more instances of films that are highlighted as good to pass the time. In this sense, in line 4, there is even a recommendation to watch it during a specific time of the day. Furthermore, in line 5 there is a comparison to the romantic comedy *500 Days of Summer*. This comes up again in line 10, where another participant follows this recommendation.

Finally, Figure 4.18 already displays most of the instances in which *con* [*with*] co-occurs with *romántica* (lines 9 and 10) to the right, whereas *triste* [*sad*] co-occurs in all occasions as another adjective than *romántica* [*romantic*] to describe a movie.

Figure 4.18 Concordance lines for *romántica* [*romantic*] collocating with *comedia* [*comedy*]

1	, como debe ser una	**comedia romántica**	. Y buenos diálogos.
2	De todas formas como	**comedia romántica**	se hace muy ligerita de ver y pasar
3	seguir bien la fórmula de	**comedia romántica**	gringa, con algunas fallas, pero
4	y te conmueve. Es una linda	**comedia romántica**	para pasar la tarde, me gustó
5	La mejor	**comedia romántica**	desde 500 days of summer,
6	Sí es predecible , pero qué	**comedia romántica**	no lo es?
7	Típica	**comedia romántica**	. Ni muy buena, ni muy mal
8	Una	**comedia romántica**	sin mayores pretensiones,
9	Una	**comedia romántica**	poco común con las típicas situaciones
10	en otra reseña que era una	**comedia romántica**	tipo 500 días con summer no dude
11	mucho que no veía una	**comedia romántica**	tan buena e atrapante

1	*how a*	***romantic comedy***	*should be. And good dialogues.*
2	*Anyway as a*	***romantic comedy***	*it's very light to see and pass*
3	*follow well the gringo*	***romantic comedy***	*formula, with some flaws, but*
4	*and it moves you. It's a beautiful*	***romantic comedy***	*to pass the afternoon, I liked it*

5	*The best*	***romantic comedy***	*since 500 Days of Summer*
6	*Yes it's predictable , but what*	***romantic comedy***	*isn't?*
7	*Typical*	***romantic comedy***	*. Neither very good nor very bad*
8	*A*	***romantic comedy***	*without major pretensions,*
9	*An unusual*	***romantic comedy***	*with the typical situations that*
10	*on another review that it was a*	***romantic comedy***	*like 500 Days of Summer I didn't*
11	*it's been a while since I saw a*	***romantic comedy***	*so good and captivating*

In the case of the HiFi Chile corpus, the highest-scoring keyword is *entretenida* [*entertaining*]. Even though its collocates do not include references to rewatching films or to genre, they do involve allusions to the experience of watching specific films, something that —as I will argue in Chapter 6— is related to narratives of film-watching circumstances, where rewatching can play an essential role. With this in mind, I focus on the collocations for *entretenida* [*entertaining*] below.

4.5.11 *Entretenida* [*Entertaining*]

This keyword co-occurs mostly with adverbs to the left, and conjunctions, nouns, and articles to the right. If we look at *entretenida* [*entertaining*] collocating with *muy* [*very*] in Figure 4.19, users tend to give details about their film-watching experience in terms of who they saw it with (lines 1, 2, 3), or when (3, 8). They also reveal what their expectations were before watching the film (lines 7 and 8), which is something I will delve into in Chapters 5 and 6. Figure 4.19 also shows instances of one of the collocates to the right of *entretenida*, i.e., *y* [*and*], in lines 4, 5, 6, and 8.

Figure 4.19 Concordance lines for *entretenida* [*entertaining*] collocating with *muy* [*very*]

1	Jurassic World, si la encontré	**muy entretenida**	, ideal para ver en familia.
2	Mad Max: 2015:	**Muy entretenida**	, mi Sra. la encontró maoma, pero
3	la vi anoche con mis xukies y es	**muy entretenida**	, buena historia, una imagen fenomenal
4	La amo !!! es	**muy entretenida**	esa película y Audrey sale ultra bella

5	del cine Argentino, historia **muy**	**entretenida**	, con situaciones y diálogos geniales
6	de acá vi No Escape… **muy**	**entretenida**	y es extraño ver a o. Wilson en papel
7	AMERICAN ULTRA, **muy**	**entretenida**	… la vi solo porque me tincó el tráiler
8	Ayer vi Sicario, **muy**	**entretenida**	… Sin saber de que iba y

1	*Jurassic World, I though was **very***	***entertaining***	*, ideal to watch with the family*
2	*Mad Max: 2015: **Very***	***entertaining***	*, my wife thought it was so-so, but*
3	*last night with my kids and it's **very***	***entertaining***	*, good story, a phenomenal image*
4	*I love it!!! it's **very***	***entertaining***	*that film and Audrey looks beautiful*
5	*of Argentine cinema, a **very***	***entertaining***	*story, with great situations and*
6	*from here I saw No Escape… **very***	***entertaining***	*, and it's strange to see o.Wilson in the*
7	*AMERICAN ULTRA, **very***	***entertaining***	*… Only saw it because of the tráiler*
8	*I saw Sicario yesterday, **very***	***entertaining***	*… Without knowing its plot and*

The following keyword is *entretuvo* [*entertained*], a conjugation of the verb *entretener* [*to entertain*]. While it also falls outside the two patterns of keywords (rewatches and genre), like *entretenida*, it does shed light on personal film-watching experiences, in a similar way that many of the narratives of rewatching films do (see Chapter 6).

4.5.12 *Entretuvo* [*entertained*]

This keyword collocates with the pronoun *me* to the left and the conjunction *y* [*and*] to the right. The collocation between *entretuvo* [*entertained*] and *me* in Figure 4.20 allows us to observe the reactions that these films caused in users while they were watching them, such as wanting to read more about it (line 1), laughing (3), or how it surpassed expectations (5). Similarly, line 6 is another instance in which the enjoyment of the film is framed in terms of how long it takes to see it.

Figure 4.20 Concordance lines for *entretuvo* [*entertained*] collocating with *me*

1	es una adaptación decente,	**me entretuvo**	. Como que abre el apetito para leer
2	, pero está bien armadita,	**me entretuvo**	… Attack on Titan Parte 1 -
3	nazi zombies…!!! esa sí	**me entretuvo**	… me cagué de la risa del
4	La encontré buena, rara también,	**me entretuvo**	(pensé que Kurt Russell sería
5	más de lo que esperaba,	**me entretuvo**	bastante, buen sonido y las
6	simple… pero bien contada,	**me entretuvo**	en la casi hora y media que dura
7	como peter pan en otro contexto,	**me entretuvo**	y harto debo reconocer

1	*it's a decent adaptation, it*	***entertained me***	*. It kind of makes you want to read*
2	*, but it's well put together, it*	***entertained me***	*... Attack on Titan Part 1*
3	*zombie Nazis…!!! that one*	***entertained me***	*... I laughed out loud with the*
4	*I found it good, weird too, it*	***entertained me***	*(I thought that Kurt Russell would*
5	*more than I expected, it*	***entertained me***	*and a lot I must recognise*
6	*simple… but well told, it*	***entertained me***	*in the almost hour and a half it lasts*
7	*like peter pan in another context, it*	***entertained me***	*and a lot I must admit*

Another keyword in the HiFi Chile corpus, the verb *viéndola* [*watching it*], also gives us a glimpse into the reviewer's film-watching experiences.

4.5.13 *Viéndola* [*Watching it*]

Since there are no significant collocates either five places to the left or right of *viéndola*, I turn again to concordance lines in order to explore the context in which it occurs in Figure 4.21. The aforementioned role that experience plays in these reviews can be noted in a reviewer who fell asleep during the movie (line 5) or who says that this is the ideal film to fall asleep to (line 1). Furthermore, line 4 presents another instance where a movie is depicted as not only good to pass the time, but also to watch with family, whereas line 3 contains another instance wherein temporality is referenced. In the case of line 6, this post involves a story about watching the film *Terminator 2: Judgement Day*, where other users join in and shape the narrative (see Section 6.4.2).

Figure 4.21 Concordance lines for *viéndola* [*watching it*]

1	, ideal pa quedarse dormido	**viéndola**	..!! el tema de la IA está demasiado
2	lejos de la realidad…; D estaba	**viéndola**	con los estados alterados…
3	con una película después de 5 minutos	**viéndola**	, tener a Joaquin Phoenix poseído
4	, pero se puede pasar un buen rato	**viéndola**	, (de hecho la vi con los xukies y
5	me la dormí y después no pude seguir	**viéndola**	, las actuaciones eran pa' matarse uno
6	T2 en los cines rex y terminé	**viéndola**	, en la escalera del cine al igual que 300

1	*, ideal to fall asleep while*	***watching it***	*..!! the topic of AI is too*
2	*far from reality…;D I was*	***watching it***	*with altered states…*
3	*with a film after*	***watching it***	*for 5 minutes, to have a possessed*
4	*, but one can have a good time*	***watching it***	*, (in fact I saw it with the kids and*
5	*I fell asleep and then couldn't keep*	***watching it***	*, (the performances were horrible*
6	*T2 at the Rex cinema and ended up*	***watching it***	*on the cinema's stairs just like 300*

In sum, there are two main aspects that the keywords in the data encompass. Firstly, users show a tendency to go back to certain films and state whether their stance on them has changed for the better, for worse, or remained the same. Secondly, there is a group of keywords that are either genres or are used to evaluate particular genres. In this way, participants show their knowledge, mainly by comparing a given movie to others that belong to that same category. In both cases, experience is essential with respect to reviewers showing their familiarity with either a given film (i.e., by stating that they have watched it at least more than once) or a genre (by comparing it a movie to others from the same or other genre). Nonetheless, and as already noted (see Section 2.3.4), users sharing their emotions when they post these reviews is also an essential aspect of online reviews, one that distinguished them from what professional critics often offer. A fruitful way to examine the most frequent attitudes and feelings that are present in the data is to focus on attitudinal stances, as well as concentrating on the ways in which certainty and likelihood are expressed (epistemic stances) and the style in which these opinions are provided (stylistic stances). In the next section, I explore this issue.

4.6 Evaluating films through stance-talking

If we go back to how I described stance-talking (Section 2.2.3), i.e., as the 'public act' of taking a point of view (Du Bois, 2007; Myers, 2010), investigating stance seems fitting to a chapter —and thesis— whose aim is to explore how these participants use language when they share their opinions online. In order to examine stances in the data, I drew on Biber's (2006: 92-93) table for the common lexico-grammatical features used for the analysis of stance, which contains a list of verbs, adverbs, adjectives, and nouns that are used to express epistemic, attitudinal, or stylistic stances (see Appendix C for the full table). The main advantage that Biber's classification of stances represented for my analysis was the possibility of relying on a clear categorisation of the different words and phrases that are connected to either epistemic, attitudinal, or stylistic stances. In other words, it made the process of identifying the different stances not only easier, but also grounded on a well-defined classification.

As Appendix D shows, epistemic stance adverbs are the most salient in the data. Indeed, as Vásquez (2014a: 41) maintains —drawing on Biber *et al*.'s (1999) work on stances in spoken conversation and comparing it to online reviews—, epistemic adverbs are roughly five times as frequent as attitude adverbs on digital reviews.[29] Not only is *Really*/*realmente* (i.e., an epistemic stance adverb that indicates certainty) the most frequent in two of the three corpora, but the rest of the results largely consist of stance adverbs that mark a degree of certainty or likelihood.

In the next three sections, I will focus on the most frequently used stance adverbs of each category across the three corpora.

4.6.1 Epistemic stances

For this particular type of stance, I will concentrate on the stance adverbs that are most frequent in the data. As noted in the previous section, there is a predominance of stance adverbs that indicate a high level of certainty and likelihood across the three sites.

[29] In a similar vein, Conrad and Biber (200) conclude in their own study that epistemic stances are more frequent overall than attitudinal or stylistic stances in conversation, academic writing, and news reporting.

Similarly to what I did in Section 4.5, I used collocation scores so as to pinpoint certain concordance lines in which the word form *really* co-occurred significantly with other words, as displayed in Table 4.8. As suggested (see Sections 4.3-4.5), adjectives play a key role in the scenarios in which this adverb is used. However, their co-occurrence with *realmente*/*really* is noteworthy: as Lorenz maintains (2002: 155), in recent decades, *really* has been increasingly utilised in English —mostly in modern spoken usage— as an intensifier that boosts adjectives such as *good*, *bad*, *funny*, etc., as opposed to its traditional function of emphasising "that an adjectival quality actually holds true".

Table 4.8 Collocates for *really* to the left and right in the IMDb corpus

I	I	I	did	not		←
but	did	did	I	I		
that	that	that	does	was		
did	but	but	was	never		
→	liked	liked	liked	liked	liked	
	good	good	like	like	like	
	do	do	good	good	do	
	enjoyed	enjoyed	do	do	good	

The most frequently used stance adverb in the Netflix LATAM corpus is the same one as in the IMDb: *realmente*. Since the amount of times it is used in the data is much smaller than on IMDb, a concordance line is more feasible in terms of space. Going back to Lorenz's (2002) distinction between *really* as a modal adverb that functions as a truth-averring item and its more recent usage as an intensifier, that I referred to in the paragraph above, there seems to be a somewhat proportionate distribution between the former (Figure 4.22) and the latter (Figure 4.23), even if Lorenz's work focuses on English and not Spanish.

Figure 4.22 Concordance lines for *realmente* [*really*] in the Netflix LATAM corpus as a modal adverb

1	por todas se pueda informar	**realmente**	. La desinformación que existe de este
2		**Realmente**	cuando vi la calificación que tenía pensé
3	directores, actores, gente que	**realmente**	hace de su profesión una búsqueda
4	para que la gente se entere	**realmente**	lo que ha causado su ilegalidad.
5	acabo de ver por segunda vez y	**realmente**	me divierte mucho, me encanta el elenco
6	pero luego me di cuenta que	**realmente**	me gustó muchísimo.
7	ampliamente, buena trama	**realmente**	me gustó
8	que en su programa	**realmente**	me lograban sacar carcajadas.
9	de terror que vale la pena ver,	**realmente**	me mantuvo en suspenso y con
10	de adicción y droga	**realmente**	muy completo. Hay cada vez más
11	y cuestiona los hechos	**realmente**	nunca pensados. Una joya abrir la mente
12	depresión por un amor fallido, ¿	**realmente**	vale la pena creer que existe?

1	*and for all it can be*	***really***	*informed. The disinformation about this*
2		***Really***	*when I saw the rating it had I thought*
3	*directors, actors, people who*	***really***	*make a search out of their profession*
4	*for people to*	***really***	*know what its illegality has caused.*
5	*just saw it for the second and it*	***really***	*entertains me a lot, I love the cast*
6	*but then I realised that I*	***really***	*liked it a lot.*
7	*amply, good plot I*	***really***	*liked it*
8	*that on their show*	***really***	*made me laugh out loud. Absolutely*
9	*horror that is worth watching, it*	***really***	*kept me in suspense and with*
10	*of addiction and drugs*	***really***	*very complete. There's more and more*
11	*and questions the facts that*	***really***	*hadn't been thought about before. A jewell*
12	*depression over a failed love, is it*	***really***	*worth believing it exists?*

The function of *really*, then, appears to be less diverse in terms of its collocations, as can be seen in Figure 4.23, where it basically follows the pattern of *really* + adjective, as opposed to Figure 4.22, where it is used with a combination of verbs, pronouns and other adverbs to emphasise the truth of a statement.

Figure 4.23 Concordance lines for *realmente* [*really*] in the Netflix LATAM corpus as an intensifier

1	no la miro, es	**realmente**	aburrida. simple.
2	Es	**realmente**	buena, es chistosa y romántica
3	las actuaciones son	**realmente**	buenas !! las películas como estas te
4		**Realmente**	es genial el concepto que da del Film
5	por las apariencias. La película	**realmente**	es muy mala, solamente supe lo que pasó
6	3/4 de la de la película me parecieron	**realmente**	excelentes… y hacia el final como que
7	un modo romántico e irónico,	**realmente**	fue muy divertido y conmovedor
8		**Realmente**	mala, no entendí nada, no tiene principio
9		**realmente**	pésimaaaa!!! súper aburrida y los elenco
10	el final pero el resto divina	**realmente**	muy romántica si quieres llorar y creer

1	*I don't watch it's*	***really***	*boring. simple*
2	*It's*	***really***	*good, it's funny and romantic*
3	*the performances are*	***really***	*good !! films like this make you*
4	*The concept of the film is*	***really***	*great*
5	*by appearances. The film is*	***really***	*very bad, I only found out*
6	*3/4 of the film I found*	***really***	*excellent… and towards the end*
7	*a romantic and ironic tone, it*	***really***	*was very funny and moving how*
8		***Really***	*bad, I didn't understand a thing, it doesn´t*
9		***Really***	*awfuuuul!!! Super boring and the cast*
10	*the ending but the rest divine*	***really***	*very romantic if you want to cry and believe*

Despite this difference, I would argue that in both scenarios, these users are emphasising their opinions, that is, leaving little doubt as to whether they thought a film was good, bad, funny, etc.

In the case of HiFi Chile, the use of the most frequent epistemic stance adverb, *siempre* [*always*] suggests a pattern in which reviewers show their familiarity with different cinematographic aspects. Figure 4.24 shows selected concordance lines (see Appendix E for all the concordance lines for this stance adverb in the HiFi Chile corpus), where it can be noted that this knowledge can be shown in relation to the *Terminator* saga (line

1), with Hollywood and how it *always* puts its own spin on what, in this case, is a real life story (line 2), with certain actors' work (lines 3, 4, and 6), with what a certain 'type of films' *always* presents (line 7), and, even if it is written as a joke, a familiarity with the alleged formulaic plot of the films in which Liam Neeson has starred in the past few years (line 5). Consequently, all of these concordance lines involve a kind of knowledge that can only be achieved cumulatively: the reviewer in line 6, for example, suggests a degree of familiarity with Al Pacino's latest work as an actor that allows him/her to state that Pacino *always* seems to be inebriated in his most recent films. Similarly, the users in lines 3 and 4 indicate that they know enough about Michael Caine and Daniel Day Lewis' work as thespians, respectively, to maintain that they deliver in the film being reviewed, as they *always* do. Such a familiarity can only be achieved, in this case, by viewings of other films starring these actors, which allow the reviewers in question to establish these comparisons.

Figure 4.24 Concordance lines for *siempre* [*always*] in the HiFi Chile corpus

1	GENYSIS. Entretenida, como	**siempre**	, me reí mucho con el papel de Arnold,
2	a Bin Laden, aunque como	**siempre**	le pone un poco de su cosecha
3	Michael Caine un bacán como	**siempre**	, Harvey Keitel OK. Y Madalina Ghenea
4	excelente película y como	**siempre**	, una gran interpretación del maestro Daniel
5	que le secuestran a la familia	**siempre**	jajaja. La verdad, no es mala la película
6	últimas películas de Al Pacino	**siempre**	me da la impresión que las hace ebrio
7	comunes.. para lo que presentan	**siempre**	este tipo de películas…

1	*GENYSIS. Entertaining, as*	***always***	*, I laughed a lot with Arnold's character*
2	*Bin Laden, although as*	***always***	*filmmakers put their own spin into it.*
3	*Michael Caine great as*	***always***	*, Harvey Keitel OK. And Madalina Ghenea*
4	*excellent film and as*	***always***	*, a great performance by the master Daniel*
5	*whose family is*	***always***	*kidnapped haha. Truthfully, the film isn't*
6	*last films of Al Pacino*	***always***	*strike me as he´s drunk while making them*
7	*common.. for what this type of films*	***always***	*present…*

Epistemic stances are not only the most frequent in the data, but are also used in various ways. In the case of *really*, it can function as a modal adverb or an intensifier. However, as noted, this stance adverb is used in both cases to emphasise a statement, which is to be expected within reviews that usually show knowledge about a particular topic (in this case, cinema). The stance adverb *siempre* [*always*], on the other hand, tends to be utilised as a way of reaffirming the sense of familiarity that reviewers have with cinema, whether it is with particular actors, types of films, etc.

In the next section, I will look at attitudinal stances and the ways in which they are used to convey emotions.

4.6.2 Attitudinal stances

When people offer evaluations, they not only tell an audience what they think about something, but what they *feel* as well (Thompson and Hunston, 2000: 6; *my emphasis*). Some examples of these expressions of feelings can be found in the IMDb corpus and its most frequently used attitudinal stance adverb, *surprisingly*. Its main co-occurrence, however, is with adjectives that indicate a positive evaluation, as shown in the selected concordance lines in Figure 4.25 (see Appendix E for all the concordance lines of this word in the IMDb corpus). By using this adverb, they acknowledge a certain divergence between what they were expecting and what they actually experienced, which is a common practice for online reviewers (Vásquez, 2011, 2014a; also see Chapter 5). Lines 8 and 9, on the other hand, show users discussing the feelings that films sparked on them: in Line 8, the reviewer describes the ending as *poignant*, whereas in Line 9, the participant recognises that the film *got* to him/her.

Figure 4.25 Selected concordance lines for *surprisingly* in the IMDb corpus

1	and interaction make this a	**surprisingly**	captivating watch. There are even a
2	exceptional form. Mean Girls is	**surprisingly**	enjoyable comedy,
3	but it was fast paced and	**surprisingly**	funny, even if a few jokes are
4	Dougherty, 2015) This was…	**surprisingly**	good. It had the right sense of humor
5	the film has a	**surprisingly**	great cast, the cannibals looked scary

6	so is the rest of the cast. The film	**surprisingly**	highly interesting and involving
7	It's a wonderful and	**surprisingly**	mature animated film that I wish
8	backwards, this culminates in a	**surprisingly**	poignant ending, but more than
9	characters, and that was fine. But	**surprisingly**	towards the end of the film got to me
10	First Avenger I thought was	**surprisingly**	well made. It had a great 30's feel

The most frequently used attitudinal stance adverb in the Netflix LATAM corpus is *increíblemente* [*amazingly*]. As Figure 4.26 indicates, from lines 1 to 3, it is employed to stress the extent to which users rejected these films. In this way, *increíblemente* accompanies adjectives such as *bad*, *stupid*, and *superficial*. Line 4 is the exception: the adverb is utilised as a means to underscore the feelings that the film triggered on this reviewer, which corresponds with Thompson and Hunston's (2000) assertion regarding evaluative statements.

Figure 4.26 Concordance lines for *increíblemente* [*amazingly*] in the Netflix LATAM corpus

1	tan mala que ni para eso sirve,	**Increíblemente**	mala y estúpida. La chica empieza
2	trama más original. Es una película	**increíblemente**	nefasta, jamás la vean,
3	Los personajes son	**increíblemente**	superficiales y caricaturizados
4	Es una película	**increíblemente**	triste y cruda pero no exagerada

1	*so bad that it isn't even good for that.*	***Amazingly***[30]	*bad and stupid. The girl starts*
2	*more original plot. It's an*	***amazingly***	*nefarious film, don't ever watch it,*
3	*The characters are*	***amazingly***	*superficial and caricature-like*
4	*It's an*	***amazingly***	*sad and raw film, but not exaggerated*

The most frequently used attitudinal stance adverb on HiFi Chile is *lamentablemente* [*sadly*]. As Figure 4.27 allows us to see, this stance adverb is utilised as a way to convey a negative attitude towards different topics, whether it is the violent reality depicted in a film (lines 2 and 3), the fact that a user had to go and see a dubbed

[30] Even though the literal translation for *increíblemente* would be *incredibly*, the latter is not included in Biber's features for the study of stance. A*mazingly*, which also connotes surprise, amazement, etc., is included, which is why I opted for this alternative.

animated film with his kids (line 4) or within a discussion about what seemingly women search for when it comes to men, which is caused by a previous debate about a particular actress and how she would never give the time of day to any of the members of the HiFi Chile community (line 1). Figure 4.27, then, represents another instance where stance markers are employed to evaluate both the films themselves and the experiences around watching these films, which once again sheds light on the central role that experience has within these reviews.

Figure 4.27 Concordance lines for *lamentablemente* [*sadly*] in the HiFi Chile corpus

1	Lo del buen sable y la plata,	**lamentablemente**	hay casos en que así es, yo creo
2	buena, tal como dices,	**lamentablemente**	no dista mucho de la realidad
3	la realidad de un tema que	**lamentablemente**	no está tan distante. Sicario,es
4	Para el día del niño Minions.	**Lamentablemente**	una vez más una de monos

1	*About the sword and money,*	***sadly***	*there are such cases, I think*
2	*good, like you say,*	***sadly***	*it isn't that distant from reality*
3	*the reality of a topic that*	***sadly***	*isn't that distant. Sicario is*
4	*on Children's Day Minions.*	***Sadly***	*once again an animated film*

Overall, the most frequent attitudinal stances in the data are utilised to express specific feelings, whether it is surprise (IMDb), disappointment (Netflix LATAM and HiFi Chile) or reject (Netflix LATAM and HiFi Chile). In this sense, both positive and negative feelings about the films being reviewed seem to be conveyed.
In the next section, I concentrate on stylistic stances.

4.6.3 Stylistic stances

This type of stance adverb is the least frequently employed in the data. In fact, IMDb is the only one among the three sites where there is a prominent use of them. As Figure 4.28 shows, *usually* is utilised similarly to other adverbs in the data, i.e., to show background knowledge of different elements of the films being reviewed. In this way,

the concordances lines below include, yet again, references to genre (lines 1, 2, 6, 7, 9), as well as to the work of specific directors or actors (line 3, 4, 5, 8, 10). Thus, and in a similar way to the epistemic stance adverb *siempre* [*always*] in Figure 4.24, the stylistic stance adverb *usually* indicates a familiarity with different aspects of films (e.g., genres, actors, directors) that offers an insight into the users' expertise with regard to cinema.

Figure 4.28 Concordance lines for *usually* in the IMDb corpus

1	Tom McCarthy – 8 I'm not	**usually**	big on these talky dramas, but this one
2	, as most fantasy movies of that sort	**usually**	do for me. Horrible Bosses: The
3	The Walk (2015) – 6.5 Zemeckis	**usually**	entertains and this one was no exceptio
4	directed, and acted drama. Idris Elba	**usually**	gives entertaining performances but he
5	I'm a fan of Jean Cocteau, and	**usually**	I like the 'Beauty and the Beast' story
6	a sucker for Nazi movies although	**usually**	it's about the Holocaust or films that
7	, the humor fell flat and while I	**usually**	like horror comedies, it just couldn't
8	but I enjoy her work, inventive,	**usually**	mildly thought-provoking, sometimes
9	at "art horror", you don't	**usually**	see in TV, but nonetheless, there isn't
10	And if you think that Malick	**usually**	wastes his star-studded casts, well, he

If we keep looking at stylistic stances from the perspective of Biber's list of features, as discussed at the beginning of this section, there is no salient use of stylistic stance adverbs on either Netflix LATAM or HiFi Chile. Things change, however, if we take into account that semiotic means such as emoticons have also been identified as stylistic devices that can mark stances (Georgalou, 2013). Even though this aspect would not be picked up on a corpus linguistics analysis, the more bottom-up approach of the remaining analytical chapters will allow me to zoom in and examine them (see Chapter 5 and Chapter 6).

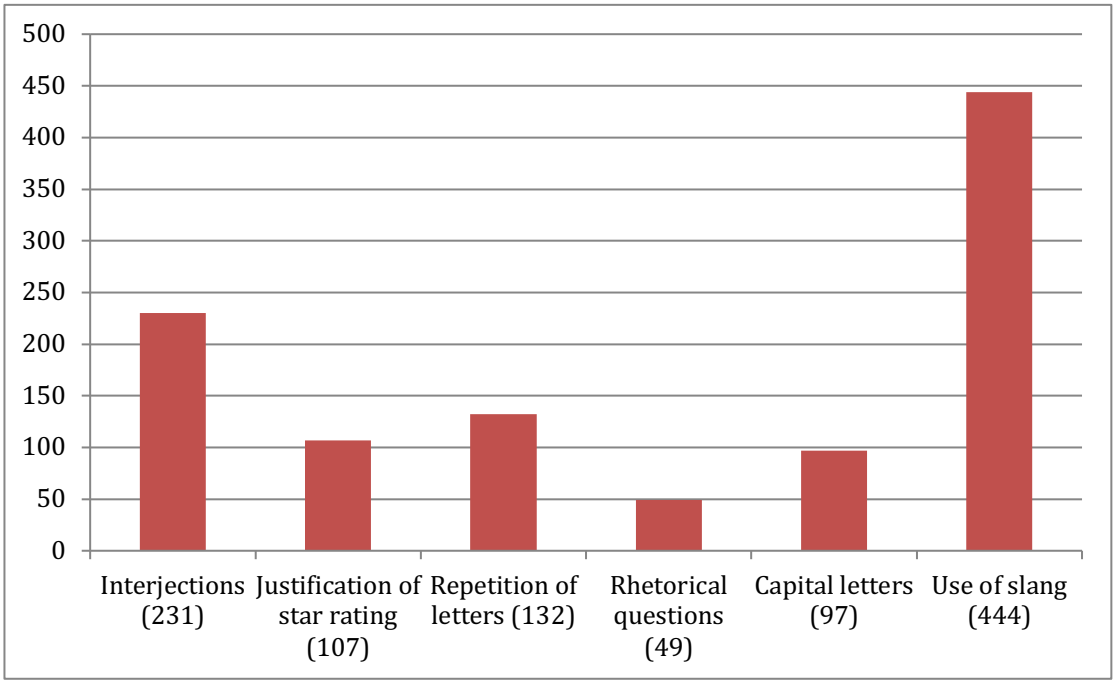
Having concentrated on lexical patterns in the data, I now focus on evaluation strategies at the level of discourse in the next section.

4.7 Discourse-level evaluation strategies

In Section 3.6.3, I discussed how I coded for *Discourse-level evaluation strategies* and the categories this encompassed. Some of these features, such as the use of exclamation marks and the elongation of vowels, have been pointed out as vernacular digital literacy practices (Giaxoglou, 2015: 58-59), that is, informal resources that online users employ to emphasise a particular opinion or sentiment. These discourse-evaluation strategies shed light on linguistic patterns within online reviews that a quantitative approach may overlook (see Vásquez, 2014a), which is why the coding process allowed me to complement the study of which frequent resources the users in the data utilise.

Out of the 1,822 total of posts, close to half of them (783) presented some form of discourse-level evaluation strategy, as can be seen in Figure 4.29. As noted, the unit of coding was each individual review; in other words, I coded 783 posts as involving some kind of discourse-level evaluation strategy. Amongst them, the most frequently used has to do with slang terms (coded in nearly 450 instances), followed by interjections and the repetition of letters.

Figure 4.29 Discourse-level evaluation strategies coded on the three sites



In the following section, I will concentrate on these discourse-level evaluation strategies, starting with the use of slang in Section 4.7.1, although—as I noted in the paragraph above— these strategies will keep appearing in the data analysis, e.g., when I examine references to genre (specifically, Sections 5.2 and 5.4) and narratives of film-watching experiences (Sections 6.2, 6.3 and 6.4).

4.7.1 Use of slang

In his work on the use of slang in the US, Kiesling (2004) claims that a slang term such as *dude* indexes a stance of 'cool solidarity', particularly among young males. Furthermore, Bucholtz (2009) maintains that certain slang terms can be taken up ideologically, thereby indexing both positive and negative stances, e.g., the Mexican slang word *guey* [*dude*] operates both as a marker of interactional alignment and a specific gendered (male) style for Mexican young people. Example 4.1 shows a review of the Mexican film, *¿Qué le dijiste a Dios?* (2014), in which the reviewer uses the Mexican slang term *padre,* which means *wow* or *great* (Shaw & Dennison, 2005), to evaluate its quality.

Example 4.1 - No username or date of publication provided, Netflix LATAM –

está muy padre y chistosa la película ya van dos veces que la veo y me sigue haciendo reír en verdad la recomiendo...

[*the film is great and funny I've already seen it twice and it keeps making me laugh I really recommend it*].

Similarly, Example 4.2 allows us to observe another occurrence of the Mexican slang term *padre* as a positive evaluation. In this case, it is accompanied by another discourse-level evaluation strategy: a justification of the star rating given to the film.

Example 4.2 - No username or date of publication provided, Netflix LATAM –

Muy padre película del principio al final no hice ni una pausa, pero el final estuvo muy arrebatado pero si le pongo las cinco estrellas.

[*Great film from start to finish I didn't pause it once, but the ending was a bit rushed but yes I grant it five stars*].

There are no more instances of *padre* used as a slang term in the data, but while *padre* is used to express a positive stance on films, the Chilean slang term *malena* is employed for the opposite purpose. This word is a derivation of *malo*/*mala*, which means *bad* in Spanish. As Example 4.3 indicates, *malena* is utilised by HiFi Chile reviewer *césar* to point out the flaws that *Knock Knock* (2015) allegedly presents. What is more, this reviewer even complements the use of *malena* with the adverb *mal* [*badly*] and the adjective *mala* [*bad*], thereby further clarifying how *malena* is used to express a negative stance regarding the film in question.

Example 4.3 - *césar*, 10 October 2015, HiFi Chile -

Knock.Knock.2015.

Malena, muy malena, mal actuada, guión malo, fue una dura tarea terminar de verla.

[Knock.Knock.2015.

Bad, very bad, badly acted, a bad script, watching it in its entirety was a hard task].

In Example 4.4, the use of *malena* is more straightforward; HiFi Chile reviewer *dionisero* merely provides the title of the film *Exodus* (2014) and describes it as '*malena la peli*' ['*a bad flick*'], thus employing another slang term (as noted in Section 4.4.1, *peli* is an informal abbreviation of *película* [*film*]).

Example 4.4 – *dionisero*, 31 August 2015, HiFi Chile -

exodus, malena la peli.

[*exodus, a bad flick*].

As opposed to the short review shown in Example 4.4, Example 4.5 provides a lengthier post about the Spanish film *El cuerpo* [*The Body*] (2012). Here, HiFi Chile reviewer *Vox Populi* states that although this film was '*vehemently recommended*' to him, including its suspenseful turn at the end (hence the onomatopoeia *chachachaaan*, an attempt to reproduce climactic sound effects), he thought that the movie was '*malena*'. This review, then, includes a user discussing his expectations before watching the film and whether they were met or not, an aspect that plays a key role within narratives in the data (see Chapter 6). Furthermore, this user also employs another Chilean slang term, *penca* (see Section 4.4.1), which is utilised in the same way as *malena*, that is, to describe something as *bad*.

Example 4.5 – *Vox Populi*, 29 July 2015, HiFi Chile -

El Cuerpo

[Película española que me recomendaron vehementemente, un thriller policial español tipo gringo con desenlace chachachaaan, pero la encontré bien malena en realidad. Variaciones de historia conocida que no importaría tanto pero es bastante torpe a ratos la dirección, partes del guión y más la actuación, y el uso de la música para "enfatizar" el ambiente todo el rato sin variar es bien penca además. Parece que no me gustó mucho pero a los que me la recomendaron los rayó].

[The Body.

Spanish film that was vehemently recommended to me, a Spanish gringo-type cop thriller with a chachachaaan twist, but I thought it was bad really. Variations of a known story that wouldn't matter so much but the direction is quite clumsy at times, some parts of the plot and the acting even more, and the use of the music to "emphasise" the ambience all the time with no change is quite bad too. It looks like I didn't like it that much but those who recommended it to me loved it].

As Kiesling (2004) argues, the word *dude* represents another occurrence of male solidarity within interactions in a similar manner to *guey*. In Example 4.6, two users are discussing the short film *Light Is Calling* and how one IMDb member felt that it depicted the hardships he/she was going through. The other participant replies with the

use of the pronoun *we* and the slang term *dude*, so as to align with this situation, before moving on to other subjects.

Example 4.6 - *Perspective_of_Uncertainty*, 27 December 2015, IMDb -

We are all falling apart, dude.

A word in Spanish that has a similar meaning to *dude* is *loco*. Although the most common translation for *loco* is *crazy*, it can also be employed in a more informal way with a related intention to *dude* or *mate*, that is, as a form of male solidarity amongst people. In Example 4.7, HiFi Chile user *Richard de Saint Germain* disagrees with member *peacemaker*, who posted a negative review of *Seven Psychopaths* (2012). *Richard de Saint Germain*'s reply actually includes two slang terms: first, *quitipa*, which is a contraction of *qué te pasa*, i.e., *what's going on with you.* This user then moves away from *peacemaker*'s stance by arguing that the movie is very good, but then ends the post with *loco*. As I will also show in Example 4.21 with the slang term *brah*, the use of *dude* here seems to represent a type of solidarity that *Richard de Saint Germain* extends to *peacemaker*, even if they do not agree. Finally, we can observe the use of another discourse-evaluation strategy, the repetition of exclamation marks, so as to emphasise this reviewer's reaction to the previous post.

Example 4.7 - *Richard de Saint Germain*, 27 October 2015, HiFi Chile -

Quitipa! es super buena loco!!

[*What's going on with you! It's very good dude!!].*

As noted, the use of slang has different roles in the reviews included in the data. Even though these terms are utilised by people with different sociocultural backgrounds (e.g., Mexican, Chilean, etc.), a common denominator is that they tend to be employed in order to emphasise particular stances, which can go from indexing solidarity amongst users (e.g., *dude*, *loco*) or either positive (e.g., *padre*) or negative perspectives (e.g., *malena*) regarding the films in question. Another prominent stance that reviewers can signal with slang terms is their pejorative position towards Hollywood, particularly its

genre of *blockbusters* (see Section 5.4.2). I will also provide another example of Mexican slang combined with other discourse-level evaluation strategies in Example 4.20. In the next section, I focus on rhetorical questions.

4.7.2 Rhetorical questions

In Section 2.2.3, I noted how rhetorical questions have been mentioned as a way of expressing a certain stance on digital platforms, one that goes beyond the specific grammatical components of a clause (Myers, 2010). Indeed, when it comes to online reviews, Vásquez (2014a: 47) maintains that rhetorical questions are usually employed to convey incredulity, which is what can be seen in Example 4.8.

Example 4.8 - *fakingworld*, 21 December 2015, IMDb -

What the hell was the point of this movie?

Incredulity, or surprise, seems to be what is also being conveyed in Example 4.9. Here, the film appears to have been better than this reviewer expected, something I will focus on in detail in Chapter 5.

Example 4.9 - No username or date of publication provided, Netflix LATAM –

¿Quién iba a pensar que una película sobre comida seria tan buena?

[*Who would've thought that a film about food would be so good?*]

In Example 4.10, which was also featured in Figures 4.17 and 4.18, this user employs a rhetorical question to prove the point that the film being discussed may be predictable, but so is every romantic comedy. In doing so, this reviewer shows a familiarity with other films that belong to the same genre, since a comparison is being established.

Example 4.10 - No username or date of publication provided, Netflix LATAM –

Sí es predecible, pero qué comedia romántica no lo es?

[*Yes, it's predictable, but what romantic comedy isn't?*].

Furthermore, Neuralter-Kessels (2011) draws on Bousfield's (2008) work on impoliteness in interaction to stress how rhetorical questions on online environments can convey a challenge in relation to someone else's skills. In the case of Example 4.11, filmmaker Gaspar Noé's talent is not exactly challenged, but there is an incredulity conveyed at someone who usually does not make mediocre films disappointing with *Love* (2015), which is enhanced by the use of more than one question mark.

Example 4.11 - *vans-voight*, 21 December 2015, IMDb -

How could Gaspar Noé make such a mediocre film??

Reviewers, thus, tend to use rhetorical questions in order to convey incredulity, to prove a point, or to question the abilities of, in the case of Example 4.11, an otherwise talented director. Even though rhetorical questions are used in different ways in the examples above, the common aspect amongst them is how, being rhetorical questions, they are not posed to obtain an answer; rather, they further emphasise a point of view.

Sections 4.7.3 and 4.7.4 will focus on evaluation strategies that are commonly used for emphasis, that is, the use of capital letters and interjections, respectively.

4.7.3 Capital letters

In the case of capital letters, participants tend to utilise them for orthographical emphasis (Neurauter-Kessels, 2011: 190). As can be seen with other discourse-level evaluation strategies, what is stressed is a positive or negative sentiment in relation to how much, or how little, they liked the film at hand, which is what Example 4.12 shows.

Example 4.12 - *peacemaker*, 1 August 2015, HiFi Chile –

Película de culto, una especie de mezcla de nouvelle vague con El Eternauta... IMPERDIBLE.

[*A cult film, some kind of combination of Nouvelle Vague with El Eternauta… UNMISSABLE*].

In some cases, such as in Example 4.13, the emphasis can be enhanced further by the repetition of vowels. Thus, both the use of capital letters and the repetition of letters tend to fulfil a similar role.

Example 4.13 - No username or date of publication provided, Netflix LATAM -

'No es mala. ES MALISIMAAAAAAAAA.

[*It's not bad. IT'S AAAAAAAAAWFUL*].

As can be seen, reviewers use capital letters to highlight the extent to which they liked or hated a film. In some cases, a movie may be *IMPERDIBLE* [*UNMISSABLE*], which accentuates the recommendation that a participant offers to his/her peers.

4.7.4 Interjections

Interjections such as *wow* or *yeah* "indicate that some expression of affect is being made" (Vásquez, 2014a: 46), although they tend to require attention to context in order to ascertain whether that sentiment is positive or negative. Examples 4.14 and 4.15 show occurrences of the former through the use of *wow*.

Example 4.14 - No username or date of publication provided, Netflix LATAM –

por lo que le di una oportunidad y… wow**,** quedé fascinado, simplemente una película única y divertida

[*which is why I gave it a shot and… wow, I was left fascinated, it's simply a unique and funny film*].

Example 4.15 - *Ounces_of_Ox,* 29 November 2015, IMDb -

Onibaba (Kaneto Shindô, 1964) - Entrant to favourites list with visuals to die for...or kill for. One word will suffice: Wow! 10/10

Examples 4.16 and 4.17, on the other hand, display instances where the interjection is used to express a negative sentiment.

Example 4.16 - No username or date of publication provided, Netflix LATAM -

ah por Dios qué mala película

[*oh my God what a bad film*]

Example 4.17 - No username or date of publication provided, Netflix LATAM -

Uggghhhh no me gusto el final!!!!

[*Uggggghhhh I didn't like the ending!!!!*].

Consequently, reviewers use interjections in a similar manner to the previous discourse-level evaluation strategies described above, that is, a way to express how surprisingly good a film was (e.g., Examples 4.14 and 4.15) or their rejection of a movie (Examples 4.16 and 4.17).

In the next section, I will concentrate on justifications of star rating.

4.7.5 Justification of star rating

This evaluation strategy is usually employed rather straightforwardly: reviewers provide a brief explanation as to why they gave a film between 0 or 5 stars (which is more likely to occur on Netflix) or between 0 and 10 (more likely to occur on HiFi Chile and IMDb). As seen in Example 4.2, these explanations may involve certain qualifications as to why the film did not receive a higher rating or, conversely, why it did receive a

high rating even though it may have certain flaws. In Example 4.18, the only reason that *Paddington* did not receive five stars, even though the review is full of praise, is because the reviewer thought the bear was *kind of childish*.

Example 4.18 - No username or date of publication provided, Netflix LATAM -

Fabulosa me encanto ja ja :D. Muy divertida y animada le doy 4 estrellas porque el oso es medio infantil.

[*Fabulous I loved it ha ha :D, Very funny and animated I give it 4 stars because the bear was kind of childish*].

In other cases, users explain why the ratings for films they have watched more than once has not (and, as happens in Example 4.19, will not) change. Furthermore, the first half of this post, that is, before this user talks about *The Hobbit* saga, is another example of the posts that I coded as *Neutral* in Figure 4.2. Even though user *teddycox* does provide opinions in this example, there are other participants who merely write the title of the film and the rating.

Example 4.19 - *teddycox*, 22 November 2015, IMDb -

ATM (5/10) Bridge of Spies (9/10) The Outlaw Josey Wales (8/10) Dr. Strangelove (10/10) (rewatch) I also caught a glimpse of the second and third Hobbit movies when my Dad was watching them. I rated them 8/10 when I saw them in cinemas, and that's not going to change.

As Example 4.13 already showed, several of these evaluation strategies can be combined. For instance, Example 4.20 presents another review of the Mexican film *¿Qué le dijiste a Dios?* (2014). Accordingly, the post includes two uses of Mexican slang, as well as other discourse-level evaluation strategies. In regards to the former, this reviewer asks a rhetorical question using the Mexican slang expression *qué pedo con esto?*, which can be roughly translated to *what's up with this?* Immediately after, the user writes another Mexican slang expression, in this case *no mames*, which has more than one translation, but in this context means *get outta here* (Munier & Martínez, 2008). Furthermore, the review begins and finishes with an interjection *JAJAJAJA*

[*HAHAHAHA*], right before asking what is up with this film and after telling the readers that the worst part of the experience was that he/she saw the whole movie.

Example 4.20 - No username or date of publication provided, Netflix LATAM -

'JAJAJAJAJ QUE PEDO CON ESTO? NO MAMES LO PEOR ES QUE LA VI COMPLETA JAJAJAJA'.

[*HAHAHAHA WHAT'S UP WITH THIS? GET OUTTA HERE THE WORST PART IS I SAW THE WHOLE THING HAHAHAHA*].

The combination of these strategies can also be directed at other users. In Example 4.21, *s-h-2008* states his/her incredulity through the use of a rhetorical question after another user reviews two films, *Heist* and *Minions,* that *s-h-2008* clearly does not consider to be among the best of 2015. However, *s-h-2008*'s expression of incredulity, and disagreement, is softened by the slang term *brah*, a derivation of *bro,* which in turn is slang for *brother*. Like Kiesling's (2004) example of *dude*, *brah* also seems to signal 'cool solidarity' among young males, even when they disagree about something.

Example 4.21 - *s-h-2008*, 21 December 2015, IMDb –
Of all the great 2015 films there is to see, you watched Heist and Minions? What the hell brah!?

The above examples have provided insights into the different ways in which users of IMDb, Netflix Latin America, and HiFi Chile use various discursive resources to express sentiments such as incredulity, surprise, solidarity or rejection towards either other users or the films themselves. Interestingly, some of these attitudes, such as surprise and rejection, were also present in the corpus linguistics analysis I carried out, especially in Sections 4.6.2 and 4.6.3. These findings suggest that a mixed-method approach can indeed yield related types of patterns, i.e., stances that convey sentiments analysed through corpus linguistics, on the one hand, and discourse-level evaluation strategies, which are also used to express specific attitudes, examined through coding, on the other.

4.8 Conclusions

In this chapter, I set out to answer the following research question:

What are the most common linguistic resources that users employ when they share their evaluations of films?

With this goal in mind, I have explored the predominant media, tone, common lexico-grammatical, and discourse-level evaluation strategies on IMDb, Netflix LATAM and HiFi Chile. The first, second and fourth issues were analysed through coding, whereas the third was studied looking at raw frequency, keyness, collocation, and stances from a mostly quantitative perspective, informed by the use of corpus linguistics.

In light of the above, the findings can be divided into two main aspects: on the one hand, patterns of use in terms of medium and tone, and on the other, patterns regarding how users evaluate the films themselves. Starting with the former, there is a clear prominence of posts where the evaluations are only expressed through text, which could be related to the design of the sites and their affordances and constraints. As maintained in Section 3.2.5, reviews on Netflix are exclusively textual, since users do not have the option of uploading photos, videos, etc. and HiFi Chile is the only one of the three sites where its members incorporate visual material into their posts. With respect to tone, users show a predominantly nonconfrontational disposition, a finding that is also intrinsically linked to the relational context of the sites. In this sense, an important aspect of these online communities, particularly the ones on HiFi Chile and IMDb, is that they present a sense of online conviviality (Tagg, Seargeant & Brown, 2017; see Section 2.4.5), one I will further explore in Chapters 5 and 6.

The most salient findings in terms of linguistic patterns of evaluation can be divided into four issues: references to genre, allusions to films that users watch repeatedly, references to time, and, finally, the stances that reviewers convey in their reviews. I will explore each of these findings below.

References to genre can be observed at the level of single keywords, multi-keywords, collocations, and even when looking at the concordance lines for the most frequently used stances in the data. This represents an interesting analytical avenue to pursue, not only due to its prominence, but also because references to genre have not been largely examined in the few studies that have looked at constructions of expertise in online film

reviews (e.g., Vásquez, 2014). Consequently, and as already noted, the next chapter will concentrate on the ways in which users invoke genre from a qualitative point of view, that is, by looking at instances that a quantitative analysis would not necessarily reveal.

The second issue in evaluation patterns is the act of watching films repeatedly. Users acknowledge how they have discovered new aspects of a film upon repeated viewings, thereby increasing their familiarity with —and knowledge of— that movie. This, however, does not mean that repeated viewings necessarily involve reviewers talking about films that they increasingly like more and more - in some cases, they report how their appreciation decreased upon subsequent viewings. Another aspect related to participants discussing productions they have seen more than once is their narrative dimension, i.e., the ways in which they position their own experiences at the centre of the review (see Chapter 6).

A third prominent evaluation pattern relates to the different ways in which time is alluded to in the data, whether it is through recommendations of films that are good to pass the time, warnings about not wasting time watching a particular film, mentions of when the reviewer saw the movie in question, etc. Thus, both the second and third findings shed light on the importance that personal experience has when it comes to the reviews in the data, whether it comes in the form of recommendations (see Chapter 5) or narratives (see Chapter 6). Furthermore, these references to time can be intertwined with the other two results described above: in this way, time can become a category in itself (certain films are categorised within the aforementioned scenarios, i.e., as belonging to those that are *good to pass the time*, whereas in other cases, they belong to the *do not waste your time with this* category). In a similar vein, several of the reviews where participants discuss watching films repeatedly include allusions to time, such as how old users were when they first saw a film, how much time has passed between each viewing, etc.

Finally, the fourth issue within patterns of evaluation has to do with the ways in which stances are conveyed. In this way, there is a mixture of positions expressed with a high level of certainty and likelihood (i.e., epistemic stances), particular feelings towards movies (i.e., attitudinal stances), and a familiarity with aspects concerning cinema (stylistic stances). If we add the findings of the coding of discourse-level evaluation strategies, they reveal specific sentiments embedded within these reviews, both positive and negative. At a methodological level, this also reinforces the importance of

combining top-down and bottom-up approaches: a corpus linguistic analysis would not, for instance, shed light on the role that rhetorical questions or the repetition of letters have when it comes to online reviews.

As I maintained in Section 4.1, my findings depart from reports that depict online reviews as being positive rather than negative overall, as well as users trying not to be too critical (Hu, Zhang & Pavlou, 2009; Kuehn, 2011; Vásquez, 2011). In my own data, although the coding yielded an undeniable prominence of positive posts over negative reviews, the saliency shown in terms of keyness and the frequency of stances suggests otherwise. In this way, even though there are several instances of words collocating significantly with adjectives in a positive way (e.g., *cinematography*, *masterpiece*), as well as a number of keywords and collocates that are used by reviewers to convey how much they liked a film (e.g., *entretenida* [*entertaining*]), there is also a wide range of adjectives and verbs that do not leave much doubt as to how little some participants enjoyed certain films. Some examples of the latter scenario are *aburrida* [*boring*], *malísima* [*awful*], *pésima* [*dreadful*] on Netflix LATAM; *guatea* [*disappoints*] and *penca* [*bad*] on HiFi Chile. Furthermore, there are instances where people write their reviews, or part of them, in capital letters so as to emphasise their negative stance towards the film at hand, although there are occurrences where they use the same resource to convey their appreciation too. Consequently, while the data do not present a strong predominance of negative reviews, the findings do suggest a different scenario to previous research on this issue, namely in terms of some users seemingly not having much trouble with being too critical when it comes to evaluating films. Furthermore, although previous research on online reviews has focused on how slang terms are used within their evaluations (cf. Vásquez, 2014a), it has focused only in data in English; in the case of this study, I have looked at material both in English and Spanish, showing how slang terms from countries such as Mexico and Chile are deployed to emphasise positive and negative stances on the films that are reviewed.

Chapter 5: Showing knowledge through references to genre

5.1 Introduction

The findings in Chapter 4 already started to pinpoint users referencing genre as a salient practice by which participants show their familiarity with a specific aspect of cinema. In this sense, fitting a film into a particular genre "suggests we presumably have some general knowledge about it" (Tudor, 1986: 3). To identify a film within a certain genre is, on the one hand, to immediately place it into a category with other movies that share specific characteristics and, on the other, it provides people with a body of films to compare to the production at hand (Tudor, 1986). Nevertheless, Langford (2005) argues that what audiences expect when it comes to genre is not only product differentiation: there is also 'a generic contract of familiarity', whereby what a specific category of films offers is "some guarantee that the price of admission will purchase another shot of an experience already enjoyed (once or many times) before" (p. 1). This idea of a repeated experience can be connected to Schatz's (1981) assertion of genre being *a cumulative process* for the viewers, i.e., the first encounter with a genre —Schatz uses westerns as an example— may be more demanding and difficult for the viewers due to certain conventions that they may not recognise at first, e.g., in terms of its narrative. In this way, it would only be after repeated viewings of films that belong to a specific genre that patterns start being more noticeable, thereby allowing for viewers' expectations to develop. Similarly, Neale (2000) maintains that genres contain more than films: they also consist of expectations and hypotheses that the audience brings to the film-watching experience, which interact with the actual movies during the process of viewing them.

If we focus on how academic views on genre have changed over time within the field of film studies, Jenkins (1992: 125-126) points out that the scholarship on cinematic genres and audiences during the last decades of the Twentieth Century often applied a top-down process, one in which the goal was to control the audience's reaction to a given film by providing the necessary context for it to be interpreted (see Altman, 1987). In a similar vein, other studies have claimed that genres shape the users' consumption of cinema: "[t]hey build the desire and then represent the satisfaction of

what they have triggered" (Andrew, 1987: 110). The advent of a new century coincided with a shift in the perception of how spectators engage with genres, one in which the audience plays an active role. As Gledhill states, genres "are fictional worlds, but they do not stay within fictional boundaries: their conventions cross into cultural and critical discourse, where we – as audiences, scholars, students, and critics – make and remake them" (2000: 241). Indeed, there is an appropriation whereby "[a]ll readers must speculate to construct a coherent narrative from the bits and pieces of information the film provides" (Jenkins, 2000: 167).

Jenkins (2000) elaborates on the fact that investigating how people make sense of the films they watch and what they mean in their lives is connected to the type of questions that reception theory and audience research usually ask. Aside from the aforementioned perspective on audiences as active rather than passive, spectators are viewed as "engaged in a process of making, rather than simply absorbing, meanings" (p. 166). In this way, and drawing on McLaughlin's (1996) 'vernacular theory' surrounding cinema, Jenkins (2000) describes a scenario where everyday viewers not only discuss their evaluations, but also meanings and interpretations.

The notion of *audience* is multi-layered in my data: while the reviewers are part of the spectators who watched the films they discuss on these websites, they also write for their own audience, that is, every possible person who may read their reviews, including active participants on the sites and *lurkers*. One of the main differences between the reviews of a professional critic and an online user is that the former usually presents himself or herself as distant from the readers, whereas the latter writes for his or her peers (Taboada, 2011: 251; see Section 2.2.3 for a more in-depth discussion). In this sense, on digital media users engage with multiple audiences that flatten into one platform, in what is known as context collapse (Marwick and boyd, 2010), which means that users of the sites comprised in the data often write for people they do not know, particularly on the completely anonymous Netflix LATAM (see Section 2.4.4). At the same time, on IMDb and HiFi Chile, where people can have usernames and engage with one another more easily than on Netflix, they do share their reviews with their peers, thereby writing for them. However, there is —as noted above— another potential side to this, that they may or may not be aware of, i.e., that their audience is constituted by everyone who can access these public sites and read these postings, even without actively participating.

With the above in mind, the research question this chapter seeks to answer is the following:

In what ways do users deploy references to cinematic genres in order to construct expertise?

The analysis in this chapter combines the application of ethnographic principles, coding, and corpus linguistics. As stated, the starting point of this chapter is the finding I began to explore in Chapter 4, with respect to how users employ genre to show their knowledge on a wide range of categories, whether it is sci-fi films, action movies, etc. This chapter will also focus on the ways in which other users respond to reviews in which genre is referenced; how time becomes a genre in itself through the recommendations that these participants share with one another; how Hollywood is referenced as a genre, including the sociocultural stances that are indexed within such positions; and, finally, the extent to which the sites' affordances shape users' alignments (and misalignments, although to a lesser extent) with one another, as well as the role that genre plays within the most-liked reviews. Thus, in Section 5.2, I focus on the differences between explicit constructions of expertise, users presenting themselves as non-experts, and implicit constructions of expertise. Section 5.3 concentrates on the ways in which the genres that film studies have traditionally analysed are referenced in the data, whereas Section 5.4 explores how certain categorisations of films emerged during the coding process. In Section 5.5, I discuss how users align with others by using the media affordances that the sites' design provides, as well as the role that genre plays in this scenario. Finally, Section 5.6 offers concluding remarks.

The findings share a similarity with other studies on online reviews in the sense that implicit constructions of expertise are noticeably more prominent than explicit constructions, as well as 'non-expert' identities (Vásquez, 2014a). Nevertheless, concentrating on an issue such as genre as a way to show knowledge on a particular topic departs from previous scholarship (e.g., Mackiewicz, 2010; Vásquez, 2013, 2014a).

5.2 Showing knowledge

As noted in Section 2.3.4, discursive constructions of expertise can be explicit or implicit. Conversely, people may admit to not being experts on the matter at hand (Vásquez, 2014a: 71-78). The key difference between explicit and implicit constructions of expertise is that the former involves claims about the alleged amount of knowledge that a user possesses on the subject being reviewed. The claims may come in the form of reviewers being 'professionals' on something, telling others how knowledgeable they are about a particular product, or using specialised terminology. Implicit constructions of expertise, on the other hand, do not include overt mentions of the users' own credentials; here, users demonstrate their knowledge by *showing* it instead of *telling* others how much they know (Mackiewicz, 2010; Vásquez, 2014a). Specifically, when users review films, their expertise is constructed implicitly, for instance, through connections that are made between productions involving certain actors, directors, etc. (Vásquez, 2014a: 77-78). In the data, explicit claims of being knowledgeable and admissions of not being an expert, or a film critic, are considerably less prominent than instances where reviewers show their knowledge. In fact, examples 5.1 to 5.7 cover all the instances, out of the total of 1,822 posts, whereby participants either boast about how many films they have seen or clarify that they are not experts or professional critics. In this section I will concentrate on the two least salient occurrences in the data, i.e., users explicitly claiming to be experts, on the one hand, and acknowledging their lack of knowledge, on the other. While this section will focus on the two least salient examples, the rest of the chapter will delve into implicit constructions of expertise, specifically in terms of how references to genre are common within this scenario.

Explicit constructions of expertise in the data involve people claiming to have seen a large number of movies. In one of these instances, shown in Example 5.1, the participant boasts about having seen a lot of films in his/her lifetime. Aside from the fact that it could be easy to question this claim (e.g., how many films really constitute 'a great amount', perhaps this 'great amount' would be little for someone else, etc.), this reviewer states his/her knowledge, but does not show it: there are no comparisons to other films, genres, connections regarding the people involved in the film, and so on.

Example 5.1 - No username or date of publication provided, Netflix LATAM-

creo que fue un completo gasto de tiempo en verla, no, no realmente, pero no es como para tener tantas estrellas de hecho ahí esta mi gran error en ver películas con mas cantidad de estrellas y resulta ser que las que menos tienen con películas fascinantes eh visto una gran cantidad de películas en mi vida y esta no tiene nada de especial pero tampoco no es de esas películas que causa nauseas simplemente simple la película

[*I think that watching it was a complete waste of time, no, not really, but it doesn't deserve so many stars in fact that's my big mistake watching films with lots of stars and then it turns out that those with less stars are fascinating movies I've seen a great amount of films in my life and this one's nothing special but at the same time it isn't one of those movies that make you nauseous it's simply a simple movie*].

A similar occurrence can be observed in Example 5.2. Here, however, the claim about having seen a lot of movies is accompanied by an onomatopoeia (*buuuuu*, which I opted not to translate, but it is basically used for emphatic effect) so as to drive the point home.

Example 5.2 - No username or date of publication provided, Netflix LATAM -

jajajajajajaj muy divertida me divertí mucho viéndola es una de las mejores que he visto y he visto buuuuu un montón es muy recomendable en especial para los niños mas pequeños de la familia si ase reír a un adulto imagínense a un porotito, yo creo que le gustaran a las personas que les gusta las películas de comedia, por el humor y lo divertida y entretenida le doy cinco estrellas.

[*hahahahahah very funny I had a lot of fun watching it's one of the best I've seen and I've seen buuuuu a lot it's very recommendable especially for the younger kids in the family if it makes an adult laugh imagine what it does to a young'un, I think that people who like comedy films will like this one, due to its humour and how funny and entertaining it is I give it five stars*]

Yet again, except for making a very general connection with a specific genre (comedy films), this reviewer does not go beyond the simple claim of supposedly having watched many films in his/her lifetime. Conversely, other users in the data not only tend to avoid these claims, but they also employ other resources to show their knowledge of cinema.

As noted at the beginning of this section, at times, users may even claim to be anything but connoisseurs on the matter at hand, i.e., they construct a 'non-expert identity' (Vásquez, 2014a: 78-79). Examples 5.3 and 5.4 are instances where this takes place and, interestingly, both reviews are once again taken from Netflix LATAM:

Example 5.3 - No username or date of publication provided, Netflix LATAM -

En verdad me pareció muy mala, nunca entendí bien la trama y, sin duda, no soy crítica de cine, pero sí me gustan las películas de terror.

[*I really thought it was very bad, never understood the plot well and, undoubtedly, I'm not a film critic, but I do like horror films*].

Example 5.4 - No username or date of publication provided, Netflix LATAM -

me encantó la película a lo mejor no es como las películas de estados unidos ni nada por el estilo pero me encanto por que es de latino américa y eso me gusta mucho eran bonitos lugares y muy romántica para el que le gusta esta trama yo la recomiendo me gusto demasiado además no soy critica del cine los demás son muy aburridos por que no les gusto al menos a mi si le daría muchas mas estrellas pero no están.

[*I loved the film maybe it isn't like the movies from the US or anything like that but I loved it because it's from Latin America and I like that very much the places were beautiful and it's very romantic for those who like this story I recommend it I liked it a lot also I'm not a film critic the others are very boring because they didn't like it at least I did I'd give it a lot more stars but there aren't more*].

In Example 5.3, right before this user acknowledges that she is not a film critic, she uses the epistemic stance adverb *undoubtedly* (Biber, 2006: 92) so as to emphasise that assertion. Furthermore, she adds that although she is not a film critic, she does like horror films. Thus, while she admits to a lack of professional expertise, she does write that she enjoys that genre, thereby suggesting that she is not entirely unfamiliar with this type of cinema. In terms of the reviewer's gender, the same occurrence takes place both in examples 5.3 and 5.4: in Spanish, certain nouns can vary depending on whether they are used to refer to men or women. In these two cases, the noun 'crítica' [*critic*] is employed, that is, the feminine variation of this word, as opposed to 'crítico', its

masculine counterpart. In this way, even if Netflix reviews are completely anonymous, the users' language use can still give us some kind of glimpse of who they are.

In a similar vein, and aside from being another case where a user acknowledges not being a professional critic, Example 5.4 also raises a point that I will discuss further in Section 5.4: the participants' cultural identities and how they may be embedded in their evaluations. For her, the movie being from Latin America played a big role when it came to her enjoyment of it. A user's cultural identity —in this case, not being from the US and a negative reaction to '*too much gringo symbolism'*— and how that determines members' stances can also be observable in Example 5.5. The review starts with a high level of certainty, using the epistemic stance adverb 'Realmente' [*Really*], but then shifts to questioning who he is to criticise. Here, Spanish once again helps us to notice this reviewer's gender: he writes "me quedé dormido" [*I fell asleep*] and not "me quedé dormida" which would have been the feminine conjugation for the verb 'dormir' [*sleep*].

Example 5.5 - No username or date of publication provided, Netflix LATAM-

Realmente es aburrida, parece interesante por ratos, no soy homofobico ni nada pero hay mucho simbolismo gringo, le falta un argumento mas fuerte, pero quien soy yo para criticar, mírala y de repente te gusta, me quede dormido las 2 veces que intente verla…

[*It really is boring, it looks interesting at times, I'm not homophobic or anything but there's too much gringo symbolism, it lacks a stronger plot, but who am I to criticise, watch it and maybe you'll like it, I fell asleep the two times I tried to watch it*].

Other cases may be less overt, as Examples 5.6 indicates. Users may not directly state that they are not film critics, but they acknowledge their lack of familiarity with a specific genre. The following post on HiFi Chile is an example of a participant who recognises a lack of experience when it comes to horror movies.

Example 5.6 - ZHOD, 11 November 2015, HiFi Chile –

No soy muy dado a ver películas de terror, pero me tinco esta... THE HALLOW, tenia pinta de buena, pero después de un comienzo interesante, guatea pesao hacia el final.

[*I don't usually watch horror films, but this one caught my attention… THE HALLOW, it looked good, but after an interesting start, it heavily disappoints towards the ending*].

As already indicated at the beginning of this section, the idea behind focusing on these less salient strategies —explicit constructions of expertise and the acknowledgement of not being an expert or a film critic— was to shed light on approaches that differ from an implicit construction, one where knowledge is shown instead of claimed or where participants present themselves as being non-experts. I will delve into this in the remaining sections of this chapter, but Example 5.7 already allows us to see an instance in which genre is used within an implicit construction of expertise, that is, where a user shows his/her knowledge instead of merely boasting about being an expert, without providing any kind of insight into this alleged vast knowledge. In this sense, the most important aspect of this review is immediately apparent: this user begins the post by situating this particular film within a top 50 of movies that also would be classified within the genre of *culebrón*. He/she then proceeds to define what *culebrón* means ('*the genre of easy tears and perpetual suffering*'), but not before addressing potential readers of this review who do not know much about cinema ('*rookie cinephiles*') or are more used to Hollywood action films such as *The Fast and The Furious* saga. In this way, the reviewer does not claim to have seen many films without further elaborating on that statement (as in Example 5.1 and 5.2), but shows his/her knowledge through a plethora of titles, names and explanations.

Example 5.7 - No username or date of publication provided, Netflix LATAM-

Dentro del género del "culebrón" esta peli entra dentro de las 50 mejores. Para los cinéfilos novatos o afectos a películas como "Rápido y furioso" o similares, explico: el culebrón es el género de la lágrima fácil y el sufrimiento perpetuo: los mexicanos sabemos de eso, simplemente recuerda, lector, lectora, cualquier película de Marga López, Pedro Infante o alguna telenovela del Canal 2 (el Canal de las Estrellas ya no es ni la sombra de lo que fue…). Vuelvo a la peli: con un inicio potente, la cinta te lleva a una buena atmósfera de "superación de la dificultad" sin embargo, a minutos del final se vuelve predecible. Debió acabar 30 minutos antes y con final feliz. Nota: buenos culebrones, los tres mejores de la historia: Pídele al tiempo que vuelva, África mía y Algo para recordar (An affair to remember, la versión original con Cary Grant y Deborah Kerr, aunque hay un remake con Warren Beatty y Anette Benning) creo que están en Nesflis.

[*Within the genre of the "culebrón" this flick easily falls among the 50 best. For the rookie cinephiles or those partial to films such as The Fast and the Furious or the like, I'll explain: the culebrón is the genre of easy tears and perpetual suffering; us Mexicans know about it, just remember, reader, any film starring Marga López, Pedro Infante or any soap opera from Channel 2 (the Channel of the Stars isn't even the shadow of what it once was…), I'll get back to the film: with a strong start, the movie takes you to a good atmosphere of "overcoming difficulty" nevertheless, minutes before the ending it becomes predictable. It should've finished 30 minutes earlier and with a happy ending. Note: good culebrones, the three best of all time: Somewhere in Time*, *Out of Africa* and *An Affair to Remember (the original version with Cary Grant and Deborah Kerr, although there's a remake with Warren Beatty and Anette Benning) I think they can be found on Netflis*].

In the next section, I focus on references to traditional genres, a discussion that begins with what I refer to by *traditional*, and then goes on to show examples of how participants discuss genre as a way of showing their knowledge.

5.3 Referencing traditional genres

As stated in Section 5.1, genres allow film critics, audiences, and scholars to differentiate types of films. In this sense, genre "is first and foremost a boundary phenomenon" (Gledhill, 2000: 221), through which we can define what distinguishes the traditional genres that have been viewed, researched, and evaluated for decades by professionals and laypeople alike. If we look at research done on this subject within film studies, some of the usual genres that have been analysed are westerns, horror films, thrillers, science fiction films, film noirs, gangster films, war/combat films, romantic comedies, musicals, documentaries, and the action blockbuster (see Langford, 2005 for an in-depth look at each of them). Thus, by *traditional* I refer to these genres mentioned above. It was with these *traditional genres* in mind that I coded every instance in the data where one of them was mentioned, whether it was a romantic comedy, a documentary, a western, etc. The relevance of this distinction is that, as I will argue elsewhere in this chapter (see Section 5.4), genres are not necessarily static: new genres can arise or several of them can be combined into one film. A film genre that has been deemed "unusual" (Nastasi, 2013), for instance, is the *mockbuster*, which essentially

consists of parodies of Hollywood blockbusters. Although there are no explicit references to *mockbusters* in my data, they constitute an example of a genre which, due to its lack of scholarly attention, drifts away from the better-known categories described above. By non-traditional genres, then, I refer to any category that departs from the well-established genres described above.

As indicated in Section 5.1, the qualitative analysis carried out in this chapter also includes the use of concordance lines, through which I will conduct an in-depth analysis on some of the multi-keywords that the corpus linguistics analysis yielded. If we look back at the 10 multi-keywords generated by comparing the IMDb corpus with the reference corpus *English Web 2013* (see Table 4.5), *sci fi* is the highest-scoring multi-keyword. The other genres that are featured among the top 10 multi-keywords for this corpus are *war drama, action movie*, *horror movie*, and *crime drama*.

In the case of *sci fi*, Figure 5.1 displays a concordance line for all the instances in which it occurs in the IMDb corpus. Most of the instances follow a similar descriptive formula: lines 1 to 11, as well as line 13, are composed of an adjective, accompanied by the genre, and then an allusion to either the performances or the director. There is a simple explanation for this recurrence, which happens in more than one of the concordance lines: the same user wrote all of these posts, which tend to refer to genre in this way. When it comes to lines 12 and 14, they are also descriptive, although written by other participants.

Figure 5.1 Concordance lines for *sci fi* in the IMDb corpus

1	12 Monkeys is an awesome	**sci fi**	action movie from Gilliam with Willis and
2	Twelve Monkeys, one of the best	**sci fi**	movies of the 90's. Brad Pitt really surprised
3	which in my opinion is the best	**sci fi**	movie since Blade Runner.
4	One of the best	**sci fi**	movies since Moon.
5	I thought I Robot was a decent	**sci fi**	thriller with Smith on decent form.
6	still is one of the most enjoyable	**sci fi**	adventure movies ever made.
7	Alphaville is an excellent	**sci fi**	mystery. Goddard's best after
8	many times since it released. A great	**sci fi**	mystery thriller with Gyllenhal
9	debut with this very inventive	**sci fi**	thriller with excellent performances from
10	I thought it was a very inventive	**sci fi**	thriller with excellent performances from

11	movies of the year, a very inventive	**sci fi**	movie from first time director Alex Garland
12	Planet of the Apes is classic sixties	**sci fi**	. Heston's best after Ben Hur.
13	Blade Runner is a superb	**sci fi**	movie from Scott. It did take me a good
14	and fear I had watching this	**sci fi**	horror masterpiece. Aliens was an awesome
15	A.I. and Mr. Nobody are two	**sci fi**	films I saw this week and both blew me

Figure 5.1 already shows posts where knowledge of genres is invoked more prominently. In this case, users also refer to this genre as *sci-fi*, which is why a concordance line for this slightly different way to refer to the same category was obtained in Figure 5.2. Lines 1 and 2 describe a blend of genres, whether it is sci-fi and fantasy or sci-fi and film noir, which suppose the necessary familiarity to identify these genres and place them within a specific category with other productions (Tudor, 1986), whereas lines 4, 6 and 7 mention films adding an element of the sci-fi genre (an *angle* in line 4; a *twist* in lines 6 and 7) to the film in question. Similarly, line 3 presents an evaluation wherein the film is not considered *particularly novel* taking into account that it is a sci-fi film. On the other hand, lines 8, 9 and 10 follow the sequence of adjective + genre.

Figure 5.2 Concordance lines for *sci-fi* in the IMDb corpus

1	that gives the film a sort of fantasy/	**sci-fi**	touch, like an alternate universe.
2	first time and I loved it the second.	**Sci-fi**	and noir are blended seamlessly to create
3	and good work all around. Just as a	**sci-fi**	film I didn't find particularly novel
4	I like that they have been taking a	**sci-fi**	angle recently, like with 'Grounded
5	9/10 - In my top 25. One of the best	**sci-fi**	films I've seen, and an amazing thematic
6	A nice tale of romance with a fantasy	**sci-fi**	twist.
7	Alphaville 9- fun	**sci-fi**	twist on noir, great visuals and overall
8	with every viewing a multi-layered	**sci-fi**	.
9	7/10 Really good, very nice	**sci-fi**	with a great story!
10	Twelve Monkeys A solid	**sci-fi**	drama. I didn't think the ideas were all

With *war drama*, we find a similar scenario to other keywords or multi-keywords: their salience is mostly due to one user employing a similar formula throughout the data in terms of specific adjectives, adverbs, and aspects of films that are highlighted (e.g., performances). Therefore, I did not obtain a concordance line for this genre, but I did for the next most salient multi-keyword, *action movie*. As Figure 5.3 indicates, in line 2, there is a discussion about a small detail that makes it '*one of the smartest things done in an action movie*'. Yet again, this supposes having at least a general knowledge about the genre at hand (Tudor, 1986) in order to, in this case, argue what makes this movie stand out within this category. The opposite happens in line 12: this film is described as ticking all the usual boxes that action movies do, but this also involves being familiar enough with the genre to recognise those boxes. Finally, line 8 shows a recognisable strategy when it comes to users indicating their level of enjoyment of a movie, i.e., including it in a list and, in this case, stating that it is their favourite within a given genre.

Figure 5.3 Concordance lines for *action movie* in the IMDb corpus

1	is a guilty pleasure of mine. An	**action movie**	that never loses speed. Reeves and
2	of the smartest things done in an	**action movie**	, it's taking two actors and giving
3	Leon is a awesome	**action movie**	with Oldman on scene stealing form
4	me but Road Warrior is an awesome	**action movie**	and Fury Road is one of the best
5	see it. Seven Samurai is the best	**action movie**	ever made in my opinion.
6	48 Hours is a decent	**action movie**	from Hill, nothing more nothing less
7	to scrap together an entertaining	**action movie**	, Colin and Greg Strause try to
8	impressed this time. My favorite	**action movie**	now, and one of my top 10 favorite
9	12 Monkeys is an awesome sci fi	**action movie**	, but that couldn't even have been
10	out of it, we'd have gotten a fun	**action movie**	with a great cast. I would rate it 7.5
11	fun in a theatre than any other	**action movie**	this year. Cavill was fantastic and
12	loved it. Here is an out and out	**action movie**	which doesn't bother about subplots

Figure 5.4 presents concordance lines for *horror movie* in the IMDb corpus. While lines 5, 6, 7, 8, 11, 13 once again involve the combination of *adjective* + *genre*, lines 1, 2, 4

and 14 deal with the expectations and hypotheses (Neale, 2000) that users bring when they engage with a genre and how, in this case, those expectations are subverted. Furthermore, in line 10 we can once again see the practice of making lists of favourites within a genre, even if this same user then asks, in line 3 (that is, in the same review), whether the film in question can indeed be called a horror movie.

Figure 5.4 Concordance lines for *horror movie* in the IMDb corpus

1	mistake of assuming it would be a	**horror movie**	for some reason when it's more of
2	Don't look now I was expecting a	**horror movie**	so I was left disappointed. It took me
3	movie ever made (you can call it a	**horror movie**	right?) Well regardless, it was
4	I was expecting an out and	**horror movie**	, which Rosermary's Baby most
5	Shining I consider to be the best	**horror movie**	ever made. Unlike other horror
6	Descent is a decent enough British	**horror movie**	, I rated it 7/10. I don't remember
7	the Dead is an awesome comedy	**horror movie**	, one of the best comedies of the 00's.
8	being a pretty enjoyable	**horror movie**	from my childhood.
9	Looks like a good enough dumb	**horror movie**	for next October, I guess.
10	Shining it is now my 2nd favorite	**horror movie**	ever made (you can call it a horror
11	Dusk till dawn is pretty good	**horror movie**	, I loved the sudden shift in tone
12	of two sisters, an awesome Korean	**horror movie**	. One of my favorite horror movies
13	The Babadook I thought was an OK	**horror movie**	but I didn't any special about it.
14	I was expecting an out an out	**horror movie**	, which this movie certainly isn't

It seems pertinent to ask, at this point, in which ways the actual word *genre* comes into play. In order to show this, I will once again display concordance lines in Figure 5.5 for the IMDb corpus. However, since several of them once again indicate a certain formulaic manner of reviewing adopted by one specific user, I only selected concordance lines where *genre* is used differently. In this way, several of these discussions are about genre itself, whether this pertains to genre accuracy (line 8) and the extent to which that deals with certain expectations the audience may have (Langford, 2005), shifting between different genres (line 2), other categorisations (line 1), noting a particular spin on a genre (line 7), a combination of genres (lines 4, 5 and

6), or considerations about a given genre, whether it was ruined (line 9) or if it is *a genre film* (line 3).

Figure 5.5 Selected concordance lines for *genre* in the IMDb corpus

1	belong to the, “so bad it’s funny”	**genre**	. We had a ton of fun watching this, but
2	seamless shifting between different	**genres**	. There’s a character twist near the end
3	but touching. A very entertaining	**genre**	film. Recommended.
4	Les Miserables look linear and every	**genre**	packed in one package (except horror)
5	films are much happier mishmashing	**genre**	, the fact that the film goes into light
6	the second. Sono’s talent for mixing	**genres**	and shifting tones is at full display
7	weak to fully cash in on its spin of the	**genre**	. Not Recommended.
8	I agree with your take on the	**genre**	accuracy. It really doesn’t feel like a
9	Seltzer and Friedberg ruined the	**genre**	with their unfunny spoofs like Date

Moving on to the multi-keywords related to genre on Netflix, Table 4.6 showed how *películas de terror* [*horror films*], *película de terror* [*horror film*], and *comedia* romántica [*romantic comedy*] were salient. In the case of *películas de terror*, Figure 5.6 allows us to see how genre is used descriptively in lines 5 and 7. Conversely, lines 3 and 4 reflect a common trope where reviewers describe how cumulative experience brings familiarity with a given genre, even if in these particular cases the actual reviews may depart from those expectations. In a similar vein, lines 1, 2, 5 and 9 also denote a familiarity with the genre, now in terms of quality, and how those specific movies are among the best (lines 1 and 2) or the few saving graces (lines 5 and 8) within the genre for these users. In line 8 we find the opposite scenario, that is, a film that does poorly as compared to other horror movies.

Figure 5.6 Concordance lines for *horror films* in the Netflix LATAM corpus

1	Esta sin duda es una de esas	**películas de terror**	que además de tener buena
2	De esas	**películas de terror**	que en verdad tienen una buena
3	, sangre y lo típico de las	**películas de terror**	, esta no es para ti. no se como
4	si eres amante de las	**películas de terror**	no es opción. Una de las
5	Una de las	**Películas de terror**	más refrescantes de los últimos
6	especiales es mejor que las	**películas de terror**	actuales, el final podría mejorar
7	sin duda una de las mejores	**películas de terror**	de todo el catálogo, la
8	haya visto en muchas otras	**películas de terror**	, suspenso o ciencia ficción.
9	logro dar con una de las pocas	**películas de terror**	que vale la pena ver, realmente
1	*This is one of those*	***horror films***	*that aside from having a good*
2	*One of those*	***horror films***	*that really have a good*
3	*, blood and the typical from*	***horror films***	*, this one is not for you. I don't know*
4	*if you're a fan of*	***horror films***	*it isn't an option. One of the*
5	*One of the most refreshing*	***horror films***	*of the last*
6	*special it's one of the best current*	***horror films***	*, the ending could be better*
7	*undoubtedly one of the best*	***horror films***	*of the whole catalogue, the*
8	*have watched in many other*	***horror films***	*, suspense and science fiction.*
9	*manage to find one of the few*	***horror films***	*that are worth watching, really*

The slightly different *película de terror*, that is, the singular noun as opposed to the plural, is also a multi-keyword, whose concordance lines are displayed in Figure 5.7. Among them, lines 3, 4, 5 and 6 are more descriptive, although in line 5 there is a comparison with *The Exorcist* (1973), by which this user shows a familiarity with one of the classics from this genre. Expectations once again come to the fore in lines 1, 2 and 7, specifically in terms of how a film is separated from the rest of productions from that genre (line 1) or the characteristics it should have in order to be unique (line 7), and how a movie does not live up to expectations for a horror film (line 2). Finally, line 8 compares the film with those from the genre that were made in the 1950s, which not only demonstrates knowledge about productions from that category during that period, but also takes the audience back to the past (see Chapter 6).

Figure 5.7 Concordance lines for *horror film* in the Netflix LATAM corpus

1	buen cine. No es la clásica	**película de terror**	de sustos inesperados y gritos.
2	personal, esta sin embargo como	**película de terror**	deja mucho que desear, los
3	Excelente	**película de terror**	psicológico. Maravillosa.
4	Creo que es la	**película de terror**	que más me ha asustado.
5	La mejor	**película de terror**	que he visto después de El
6	una buena películas. Es una	**película de terror**	psicológico manejada de
7	estaría bueno ver una	**película de terror**	donde aparezcan personas
8	y nada. Si parece una	**película de terror**	de los años cincuenta, pero

1	*good cinema. It's not the classic*	***horror film***	*with unexpected scares and screams.*
2	*personal, this one however as a*	***horror film***	*leaves a lot to be desired, the*
3	*Excellent psychological*	***horror film***	*. Marvellous.*
4	*I think it's the*	***horror film***	*that has scared me the most*
5	*The best*	***horror film***	*I've seen since The*
6	*a good film. It's a psychological*	***horror film***	*dealt in a way*
7	*it'd be nice to see a*	***horror film***	*that features normal people*
8	*and nothing. Yes it seems like a*	***horror film***	*from the fifties, but*

Expectations relating to genre can also be seen in Figure 5.8 for *comedia romántica*. In lines 1 and 5, reviewers state that they liked the films for being uncommon (line 1) and unusually good and enthralling (line 5). On the other hand, in line 3, the film is praised precisely because it is like a romantic comedy should be: corny. In a similar vein, in line 10, the reviewer acknowledges that the movie is predictable, but then rhetorically asks what romantic comedy is not that way, and in line 9, the fact that the movie does not seem to pretend to aim higher than it should is viewed positively.

It is worth pointing out that line 4 includes a notion that I will further explore in Section 5.4: the way in which films can be categorised in relation to time, that is, being suitable to spend an afternoon watching them.

Figure 5.8 Concordance lines for *comedia romántica* in the Netflix LATAM corpus

1	alguien más se lo habrá ganado? Una	**comedia romántica**	poco común con las típicas
2	manera. De todas formas como	**comedia romántica**	se hace muy ligerita de ver
3	cursi, como debe ser una	**comedia romántica**	. Y buenos diálogos.
4	y te conmueve. Es una linda	**comedia romántica**	para pasar la tarde, me gustó
5	, hace mucho tiempo que no veía una	**comedia romántica**	tan buena y atrapante. Muy
6	ni interesante ni inesperado. Típica	**comedia romántica**	. Ni muy buena, ni muy mala
7	otra reseña que era una	**comedia romántica**	tipo 500 días con summer
8	las películas de este género! La mejor	**comedia romántica**	desde 500 days of summer
9	Una	**comedia romántica**	sin mayores pretensiones,
10	Sí es predecible, pero qué	**comedia romántica**	no lo es? Vale la pena verla

1	*anyone else won it? An uncommon*	***romantic comedy***	*with the typical*
2	*way. Anyway as a*	***romantic comedy***	*it's very enjoyable to see*
3	*corny, as a*	***romantic comedy***	*should be. And good dialogue.*
4	*and it moves you. It's a beautiful*	***romantic comedy***	*to spend an afternoon, I liked it*
5	*it's been a while since I've seen a*	***romantic comedy***	*so good and enthralling. Very*
6	*interesting nor unexpected. Typical*	***romantic comedy***	*. It's not too good, nor too bad*
7	*another review saying that it was a*	***romantic comedy***	*like 500 Days of Summer*
8	*films from this genre! The best*	***romantic comedy***	*since 500 Days of Summer*
9	*A*	***romantic comedy***	*without major pretensions,*
10	*Yes it`s predictable, but what*	***romantic comedy***	*isn't? It's worth watching*

Similar to what I did with the IMDb corpus, a concordance line was obtained for the word *género* [*genre*]. However, since Netflix LATAM reviewers use *genre* far less frequently, Figure 5.9 includes all the occurrences of *género*. A striking pattern here is that every concordance in this figure shows enough background knowledge of the genres being discussed to make recommendations (lines 2, 11, and 12), lists (line 3), comparisons with other films from the same genre (lines 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 13), comparisons with films from other genres (lines 10 and 14) and explanations (line 9).

Figure 5.9 Concordance lines for *género* in the Netflix LATAM corpus

1	, tampoco agrega algo nuevo al	**género**	, pero ya casi no hay películas así
2	recomendada para los amantes del	**género**	!!
3	Dentro del	**género**	del culebrón esta peli entra dentro de las 50
4	la película, sosa como todas las del	**género**	, pero el doblaje en español es terrible
5	la película es una copia de otras del	**género**	. Es un collage de varias películas, no
6	a la mente las mejores películas del	**género**	de los años 70s y 80s. El Resplandor
7	en sí es una fiel representante del	**género**	thriller psicológico, donde con la magnífica
8	estas te reviven la esperanza en el	**género**	de terror. Puede parecer lenta para algunos,
9	, explico, "el culebrón es el	**género**	de la lágrima fácil y el sufrimiento perpetuo
10	no sé cómo llamar a este	**género**	de películas surrealistas y metafórico
11	buena. Son de las pocas de este	**género**	que podría atreverme a recomendar.
12	Jennifer A. actuar así, en este	**género**	. Me encantó! La vería otra vez.
13	si te gustan las películas de este	**género**	! La mejor comedia romántica desde 500
14	como casi todas las del mismo	**género**	.
15	un poco de condimento de otros	**géneros**	que hacen que no sea el típico romance

1	*also doesn't add anything new to the*	***genre***	*, but there are hardly any other films like this*
2	*recommended for those who love this*	***genre***	*!!*
3	*Within the*	***genre***	*of the culebrón this film fits into the 50*
4	*the film, bland like all from this*	***genre***	*, but the dubbing in Spanish is terrible*
5	*film is a copy of others from the same*	***genre***	*. It's a collage of many films, not*
6	*to mind the best films of the*	***genre***	*from the 70s and 80s. The Shining*
7	*example of the psychological thriller*	***genre***	*, where with the magnificent*
8	*these revive hope in the horror*	***genre***	*. It may seem slow for some,*
9	*, I'll explain, "the culebrón is the*	***genre***	*of the easy tear and perpetual suffering*
10	*I don't know how to call this*	***genre***	*of surrealist films and the metaphorical*
11	*good . It's one of the few from this*	***genre***	*that I'd dare to recommend*
12	*Jennifer A. acting like this, in this*	***genre***	*. I loved it! Would watch it agaib.*
13	*if you like films from this*	***genre***	*! The best romantic comedy since 500*
14	*like almost all from this*	***genre***	*.*
15	*a bit of condiments from other*	***genres***	*that separate it from the typical romance*

Lastly, the only multi-keyword that resembles a genre in Table 4.7 for HiFi Chile is *tipo de películas* [*type of films*]. As can be seen in Figure 5.10, background knowledge is once again shown in different ways. While line 1 implies familiarity with a particular actor —*Game of Thrones'* Kit Harington— and how he allegedly is miscast in 'that type of films', i.e., action films, line 3 presents an argument as to how films from the *Star Wars* saga have to be *EPIC*, emphasising this adjective with the use of exclamation marks. In the case of line 2, there is also a sense of familiarity with that particular type of films, which is enhanced by the epistemic stance adverb *always* (Biber, 2006: 92), as I noted in Section 4.6.1.

Figure 5.10 Concordance lines for *tipo de películas* in the Netflix LATAM corpus

1	falta todavía… no lo veo en este	**tipo de películas**	, como que no se cree el cuento
2	para lo que presentan siempre este	**tipo de películas**	… Cine Polar.
3	a los ñoños y se agradece, pero este	**tipo de películas**	tiene que tener ÉPICA si no son

1	*not there yet… I don't see him in this*	***type of films***	*, it's as if he doesn't believe his hype*
2		*for what this* ***type of films***	*always present… Polar cinema.*
3	*to the nerds and that's good, but this*	***type of films***	*have to be EPIC otherwise they*

Unlike with the other two corpora, I did not obtain a concordance line for *género* for HiFi Chile, since it is only mentioned three times, and all of them in a descriptive manner, that is, as mere statements of the specific genre each film belonged to, as opposed to considerations about the films in terms of their genres and whether they fit into that category, if they surpassed or did not meet expectations, etc.

As I have argued, the expectations that audiences bring to the film-watching experience play a central role within the process of seeing movies. These expectations more often than not relate to the quality of the production, which will be a pivotal aspect of the next section.

5.4 Emerging categorisations of films

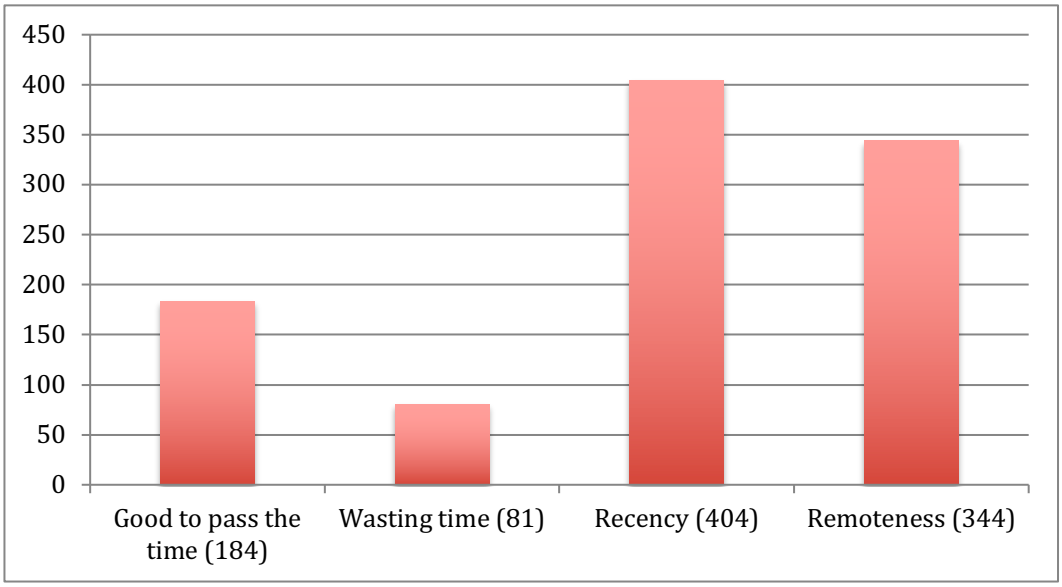
While there have been specific genres that have been both enjoyed and analysed by audiences and film scholars alike for decades since the Twentieth Century, this does not mean that there is no room for new categorisations to appear. By categorisations I mean films that are brought together by a common characteristic (or more than one). As for *who* brings them together, I argue that the reviewers themselves, both professional and laypeople, are responsible for this. In this sense, as Carroll (2000: 275) maintains, "there are many different categories which we may call upon to evaluate different types of films". A key aspect of this statement is its focus on evaluation. As I claim in this section, evaluating a film —that is, assessing its quality— can lead to categorisations that fall outside the traditional ones explored in Section 5.3. Indeed, Carroll (2000: 276) goes on to state that film categories mutate constantly, as some disappear, others change, and new ones emerge. In addition, Tudor (1987: 7) maintains that genre notions are a set of cultural conventions instead of classifications that professional film critics make; thus, genre "is what we collectively believe it to be".

In the case of my own data, I have identified a set of categorisations through coding that are assigned by the reviewers themselves and are directly connected to the films' quality or lack thereof, as opposed to certain features of their plot that would situate them as a romantic comedy or a thriller, for instance. In this way, whether a movie is good or bad will be connected to the notion of time, that is, films will be grouped by reviewers as good to pass the time, good for a Sunday afternoon, etc. (see Section 5.4.1). Conversely, users will also warn their audience not to waste their time with particular films because they are not worth it. Moreover, participants use certain resources, such as slang terms, to convey their pejorative stance on Hollywood, particularly its *blockbusters* (see Section 5.4.2). As I will argue, these particular linguistic forms that are utilised to refer to cinematic aspects index not only stances, but also the participants' social identity (Ochs, 1996).

5.4.1 Time as a genre categorisation

The first of the aforementioned emergent categories constitutes another finding that I obtained through coding: out of the total of 1,822 posts analysed, I coded 791 as belonging to the code *References to time*. As Figure 5.11 indicates, there is a prevalence of films that users in the data describe as 'good to pass the time' over regrets or warnings about how a film will make people waste their time. Regarding recency and remoteness, users refer to them in the narratives they tell, which is why I will examine this issue in detail in Chapter 6.

Figure 5.11 Coding results for *References to time*



An important aspect of films that users deem good to pass the time is the caveat that this recommendation does not necessarily mean that the movies at hand are of the highest quality - what they do is serve the function of allowing the audience to be entertained for a couple of hours. The examples below allow us to understand this distinction. Example 5.8 for instance, offers a clear illustration of this, as the reviewer clarifies that the film is entertaining enough to pass the time, but he/she would not go as far as

classifying it as good. Moreover, this last adjective is written with capital letters, a *discourse-level evaluation* strategy, so as to emphasise this distinction.

Example 5.8 - No username or date of publication provided, Netflix LATAM -

Es entretenida, como para pasar el rato, pero no tanto para calificarla como BUENA.

[*It's entertaining, as in to pass the time, but not enough to qualify it as GOOD*].

In a similar vein, the review shown in Example 5.9 starts in the same way, with the use of the verb *is* and the adjective *entertaining.* Here, however, more negative aspects of the movie at hand are brought to the fore, such as the plot and its lack of realism. Finally, there is also a direct acknowledgement of this film not being good, but at least suitable if one wants to have fun.

Example 5.9 - No username or date of publication provided, Netflix LATAM -

Es entretenida, y está bien si no tienes nada que hacer. Pero está muy exagerada, la historia corre demasiado rápido quitándole el realismo. No es una buena película, pero hay veces que no es necesario que sea buena para entretenerse.

[*It's entertaining, and it's fine if you don't have anything to do. But it's very exaggerated, the story goes too fast, taking away its realism. It's not a good film, but there are times when it's not necessary for it to be good in order to be entertained*].

Example 5.10 shows another instance in which the reviewer describes the film as '*simple, but well told*'. Furthermore, once again, a user states that the movie at hand entertained him/her throughout its duration. This post, thus, represents another occurrence where the film is not praised as some form of high art (it is *simple*, after all), but it is considered entertaining.

Example 5.10 - *ZHOD,* 28 September 2015, HiFi Chile -

7 Minutes, película simple... pero bien contada, me entretuvo en la casi hora y media que dura... recomendable.

[*7 Minutes, a simple film… but well told, it entertained me throughout the almost hour and a half it lasts… recommendable*].

In Example 5.11, the user shows his/her knowledge of more than one genre by claiming that the film in question does not offer anything already not seen in horror, suspense, or science fiction. There is, however, a noticeable similarity with the two previous posts in the way in which this review ends: as happens with several other posts in the data, this user recommends the film for people to '*spend a nice time*'. Moreover, the recommendation here has to do with watching the film under particular circumstances (i.e., on an afternoon) and to avoid it if one is looking for a masterpiece.

Example 5.11 - No username or date of publication provided, Netflix LATAM-

Encontré que la película es de pobre argumento, no tiene nada que no se haya visto en muchas otras películas de terror, suspenso o ciencia ficción**.** Lo rescatable es que la sucesión de hechos hace que uno mantenga la atención. Si quieren pasar un rato agradable con más gente en una tarde, véanla; pero si buscan una gran obra de arte, o una película para recordar, deben buscar otros títulos.

[*I thought the film had a poor plot, it doesn't have anything that hasn't been seen in many other horror, suspense, or science fiction films. A good thing about it is that the sequence of events keeps one's attention. If you want to spend a nice time with more people on an afternoon, watch it' but if you're looking for a masterpiece, or a film to remember, you must search for other titles*].

In Example 5.12, HiFi Chile user *jrb121* describes *From Paris with Love* (2010) as a film made for people who do not have anything better to do than spending an hour and a half watching this film. Thus, this represents yet another movie whose quality is far from being praised, which seems to belong to the category of productions that are *only good to pass the time*. In addition, this reviewer shows his/her knowledge of action films starring '*old men*' such as John Travolta, Liam Neeson and Denzel Washington by establishing a comparison between that specific film and others with related characteristics.

Example 5.12 - *jrb121*, 21 September 2015, HiFi Chile -

Otra de Travolta siguiendo la linea de viejos reparte cachamal (Neeson, Denzel, etc.).

No tiene mas finalidad que gastar una hora y media libre sin tener nada mejor que hacer.

[*Another one with Travolta following the line of ass-kicking old men (Neeson, Denzel, etc.),*

It doesn't have any other purpose than spending a free hour and a half with nothing better to do].

The same HiFi Chile user, *jrb121*, follows a similar formula in another review, this time for *Against the Sun* (2014). In this case, *jrb121* even clarifies that watching the film at the cinema is not really worth it, and compares it with the type of movies that cable channel HBO usually includes in its programming. Although he/she finishes the review by noting that *Against the Sun* is indeed good to pass the time, this post constitutes another example where the movie's quality is qualified; it may be entertaining, but not to the point of going out and buying a ticket in order to enjoy it.

Example 5.13 - *jrb121*, 15 November 2015, HiFi Chile -

entretenida, sin mas... no creo que sea para verla en cine, de hecho me pareció mas de esas HBO, pero igual salva el rato.

[*entertaining, that's it… I don't think it has to be seen at the cinema, I actually thought it's like the ones that HBO shows, but it's still good to pass the time*].

Films are also described as 'good to pass the time' without clarifying that their quality is not high. In Figure 5.12, this HiFi Chile user does precisely that, as well as utilising the affordance of uploading the film's poster.

Figure 5.12 Screenshot of HiFi Chile review (Hoy, "Absolutely Anything…")

[*Today, "Absolutely Anything. VERY funny, good to pass the time*].

- Total, 17 December 2015, HiFi Chile –

There are also more examples of reviews that combine users referring to films as good to pass the time and mentioning a genre such as comedy, which is what happens with examples 5.14, 5.15 and 5.16 below.

Example 5.14 - No username or date of publication provided, Netflix LATAM -

Una comedia ligera, sin pretensiones y con dos grandes de la pantalla para pasar una rica tarde de domingo…

[*A light comedy, with no pretentions and with two greats from the big screen to spend a nice Sunday afternoon…*].

Example 5.15 - No username or date of publication provided, Netflix LATAM-

muchísima mas entretenida de lo q parece! súper recomendable si estas buscando una comedia para pasar el rato.

[*much more entertaining than it seems to be! Super recommendable if you're looking for a comedy to pass the time*].

Example 5.16 - No username or date of publication provided, Netflix LATAM -

una comedia bien lograda, sin humor escatológico, todo a base de buenas actuaciones e ingenio, no te va a cambiar la vida, pero te va a sacar una sonrisa y hacer pasar un buen momento.

[*A well-made comedy, without scatological humour, everything supported by good performances and ingenuity, it won't change your life, but it will make you smile and have a good time*],

Two of these reviews are for the same film, *La peor noche de mi vida* (*Walk of Shame*), which makes it easier to understand the recurrence of references to comedy, while the other is about *Juntos… pero no tanto* (*And So It Goes*). Furthermore, the last of these three posts once again includes a qualification: the reviewer states that the film will not change the audience's lives, but it will allow them to enjoy a good moment.

Similarly, Example 5.17 also involves a user recommending a film, *No Escape* (2015), as suitable for an afternoon of enjoyment, even though its plot may be *silly*.

Example 5.17 - *Imo,* 26 December 2015, HiFi Chile -

No Escape 2015: Para pasar la tarde, drama y suspenso, argumento weon para justificar el desarrollo.

[*No Escape 2015: For spending the afternoon, drama and suspense, a silly plot to justify what happens*].

Even if some films may be deemed *only* good enough to pass the time, that is, a step below being actually good, there are situations where participants determine that a movie was not even good for that. This is what happens in Example 5.18, where, according to the user, the film does not even deserve to be recommended as good to enjoy it for a few hours. In addition, this reviewer emphasises this position by using several exclamation marks and telling the readers that the first 10 minutes were enough to give up on the movie. In this sense, not only does the user employ a *discourse-level evaluation strategy* such as repetition of letters (see Section 4.7), but he/she also frames its evaluation in terms of time.

Example 5.18 - No username or date of publication provided, Netflix LATAM -

Pésima película!!!!!!!!!! la vi por 10 minutos y me aburrió…… no me reí con absolutamente nada, ni siquiera recomiendo esta película para pasar el rato….Horrible!

[*Awful film!!!!!!!!!! I watched it for 10 minutes and it bored me… I didn't laugh at absolutely anything, I don't even recommend this film to pass the time… Horrible!*].

Similarly, the user in Example 5.19 states that the film being reviewed was not even good to laugh for a while, thereby placing it outside this category of films that will at least entertain audiences for a couple of hours. Thus, the claim here, as well as in Example 5.18, is that far from spending a good or nice time, those who watch these particular films will end up wasting their time. Unlike some of the examples above, where the films' quality could be questionable, but at least not their ability to entertain audiences, here they seem to fall into a category of movies where not even entertainment is guaranteed.

Example 5.19 - No username or date of publication provided, Netflix LATAM -

Fui a ver esta película al cine sabiendo que era mala solo para reírme un rato, es tan mala que ni para eso sirve.

[*I went to the cinema to the see this film knowing it was bad only to laugh for a while, it's so bad that it doesn't even work for that*].

Some of these recommendations refer to specific moments where it is best to watch the movies being evaluated. In Example 5.20, for instance, this reviewer criticises the gambling scenes in *Mississippi Grind* (2015), as well as the whole direction of the film. However, this user does describe it as a '*fair film*', and recommends it for a rainy afternoon. Consequently, this participant positions the movie as one with flaws, but which is at least good enough to pass the time in particular circumstances (in terms of weather and a specific moment of the day).

Example 5.20 – *LaxNauticus*, 13 December 2015, IMDb –

Mississippi Grind (2015) - 5 I'm a bit of a gambler (some poker and sports betting here and there), but I didn't love this. The actual gambling scenes were poor and the whole direction was mediocre. A fair film to pass your time on a rainy afternoon though, but I prefer Rounders all around (pun not intended).

Amongst these particular moments that users discuss in their recommendations, Sunday is the one most frequently mentioned, particularly in the data in Spanish, whether it is through the use of the word *domingo,* or through an allusion to the aforementioned *fomingo*, which combines the words *fome* [*boring*] and *domingo* [*Sunday*] (see Section 4.4.1). What makes the use of *fomingo* particularly interesting for the purposes of this study is that it suggests that these films are being recommended for what is, allegedly, the 'boring' day of the weekend; in this way, these films may be of use when there is nothing better to do. In Example 5.21, HiFi Chile user *tedyhawk* not only recommends *Ex Machina* (2014) for a *fomingo*, but even adds the ideal kind of weather (i.e., a rainy day) and time of the day (i.e., afternoon) for it to be seen, much like in the previous example.

Example 5.21 - *tedyhawk,* 9 August 2015, HiFi Chile -

Ex- Machina... la verdad, bien entretenida la pelicula... chuta si cuento algo será tremendo spoiler, pero recomendable para un fomingo lluvioso en la tarde.

[*Ex- Machina… honestly, a very entertaining film… bloody hell if I say something it'll be a massive spoiler, but recommendable for a rainy [boring + Sunday afternoon*].

Examples 5.22 and 5.23 constitute more instances where films are recommended for a Sunday. These films are also qualified, yet again, as being '*nothing out of the ordinary*' or '*bland*', respectively. Thus, a pattern that emerges in terms of recommendations that reference Sundays is that the kinds of films that participants mention are not necessarily bad, but neither are they masterpieces either. Rather, they seem to be appropriate to be enjoyed for a couple of hours, without being too profound or requiring too much concentration from the audience.

Example 5.22 - No username or date of publication provided, Netflix LATAM -

Comedia para DOMINGO de películas. Está entretenida, nada fuera de lo normal. Todo dulce, todo gloria, todo fácil.

[*A comedy for a SUNDAY of films. It's entertaining, nothing out the ordinary. Everything's sweet, everything's glorious, everything's easy*].

Example 5.23 - No username or date of publication provided, Netflix LATAM-

Me agradó la película, sosa, como todas las del genero, pero el doblaje en español es terrible. La película en definitiva está dominguera.

[*I liked the film, bland, like all from this genre, but the dubbing in Spanish is terrible. Anyway, the movie is definitely for a Sunday*].

There are different ways in which time can manifest itself in this context. Another scenario has to do with users emphasising how watching these films can provide a nice family moment. In Example 5.24, the mention of the movie *Spy* as being fitting to be seen in these circumstances is accompanied by the suggestion to watch it on a specific day, during a specific time of that day, much like in the two previous examples.

Example 5.24 - *Striker*, 28 July 2015, HiFi Chile -

Una comedia parodia a Bond (qué insolencia!) pero muy bien hecha: "SPY". Para entretener a la familia un domingo por la tarde, pero muy recomendable.

[*A comedy that parodies Bond (such insolence!) but very well done: "SPY". To entertain the family on a Sunday afternoon, but very recommendable*].

The same user offers a similar recommendation while reviewing the film *Jurassic World* (2015), as shown in Example 5.25, in the sense that it is also framed as good for a Sunday afternoon.

Example 5.25 *Striker*, 16 August 2015, HiFi Chile

Ayer vi Jurassic World... buena y entretenida, bien hecha, para tarde de domingo en familia.

[*Yesterday I watched Jurassic World… good and entertaining, well done, for a Sunday afternoon with the family*].

Reviews can also involve recommendations of films that are '*ideal to watch with the family*', without necessarily clarifying *when* would be the best time to watch them, as Examples 5.26 and 5.27 indicate.

Example 5.26 - *Drogun*, 19 July 2015, HiFi Chile -

Hoy vi Jurassic World, si la encontré muy entretenida, ideal para ver en familia.

[*Today I watched Jurassic World, I did think it was very entertaining, ideal to watch with the family*].

In Example 5.27, aside from a specific recommendation to watch the film with the family, user *fabto* admits to almost crying towards the end of *Little Boy* (2015). By doing so, this participant positions his/her experience watching the film at the centre of the text, thereby adding a narrative dimension to the review (see Chapter 6).

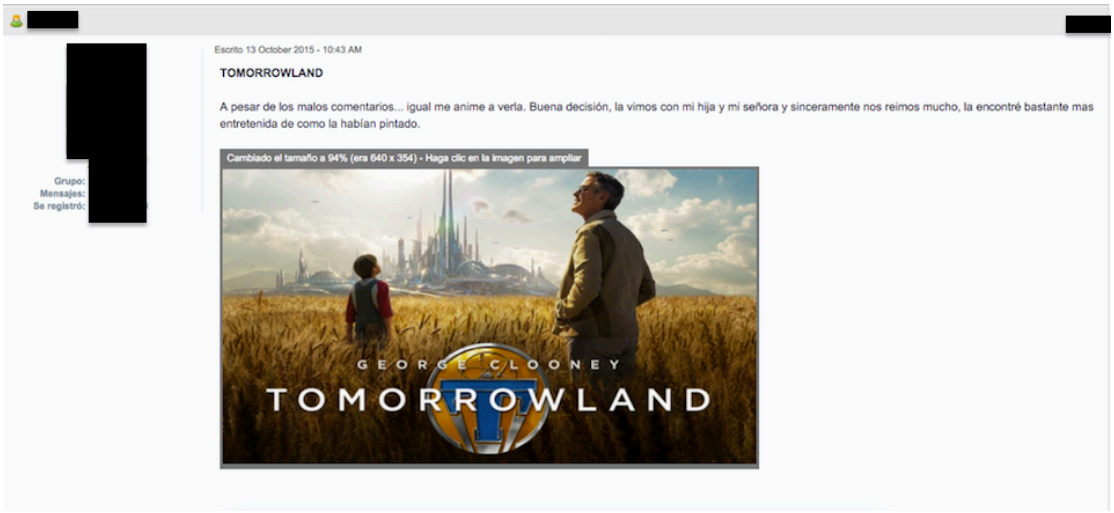
Example 5.27 - *fabto*, 13 September 2015, HiFi Chile –

Little Boy, la película pa buena, casi choreee al final, mansa peli pa ver en familia.

[*Little Boy, what a great film, I almost crieeed at the end, an awesome film to watch with the family*].

Other posts may not feature a direct recommendation to watch a film with the family, but a positive experience in doing so. Figure 5.13 displays one such review, which is again accompanied by the film's poster, in another case where the affordance of posting pictures that HiFi Chile allows is used.

Figure 5.13 Screenshot of HiFi Chile review ("Tomorrowland…")



[*TOMORROWLAND.*

Despite the bad comments… I ended up watching it anyway. Good decision, I saw it with my daughter and my wife and we sincerely laughed a lot, I thought it was far more entertaining than how it'd been described].

- ZHOD, 13 October 2015, HiFi Chile -

Finally, there are cases where the recommendation is not to watch a certain film, but to avoid it, so as not to waste time. Therefore, the recommendation here is once again framed as a sort of warning: users who have subjected themselves to the unsatisfying experience of watching these films try to get their peers to avoid making the same mistake. In this way, both examples 5.28 and 5.29 show how the users' own negative experience play a key role when it comes to them not recommending these films to the rest of the community. The user in Example 5.28 even adds a narrative layer to the review by telling the audience that he/she had just finished watching the film and ran to write the review, thereby coming closer to the *here and now* of telling (Georgakopoulou, 2007) than the telling of past events, something that does not usually occur in online reviews (see Vásquez, 2014a).

Example 5.28 - No username or date of publication provided, Netflix LATAM -

NO PIERDAN EL TIEMPO VIENDO ESTO, ESTA DE PENA AJENA, LA COSA MAS ABURRIDA Y TONTA QUE EH VISTO :(

[*DON'T WASTE TIME WATCHING THIS, IT'S EMBARASSING, THE MOST BORING AND STUPID THING I'VE SEEN :(*].

Example 5.29 - *Imo*, 24 October 2015, HiFi Chile –

The Vatican Tapes (2015), acabo de termina de verla y corrí a escribir aquí, para advertirles de que no pierdan el tiempo como yo lo hice; malísima.

[*The Vatican Tapes (2015), I just finished watching it and I ran to write here, to warn you not to waste time like I did; awful*].

There can also be a sense of boredom, e.g., being bored to tears, and not being able to even finish watching the film, as shown in Example 5.30, which suggests actual suffering, either real or exaggerated, so as to illustrate the extent to which this participant disliked the production.

Example 5.30 - *insidedogs*, 29 November 2015, IMDb -

The French Lieutenant's Woman (Karel Reisz, 1981) didn't finish/10...I was bored to tears, frankly, but I sampled a bit of the beginning of the novel and it was amazing; I'll have to finish that (the book, not the movie) someday.

The categorisations in this section, i.e., the aspect, or aspects, that groups the references to these films together, are instances where the film's quality is positioned in terms of time. In this way, some films may be *good to pass the time*, but others will not even qualify for that. On the contrary, they will either involve reviewers complaining about the time they wasted watching a particular film or warning other participants not to waste their time too. Another issue that brings these reviews together is that all of these considerations around time are embedded into recommendations, e.g., *this film is good to pass the time*, *avoid this one if you do not want to waste your time*, etc.; in this way, reviewers position themselves as knowledgeable enough to know what is best for the rest of the community in terms of what to watch and what to avoid. As noted at the beginning of this section, these ways to describe films emerged as patterns through the

coding process, but in the next section I concentrate on an industry with its own genre, where different ways to refer to Hollywood films also emerge through coding.

5.4.2 Genre categorisations of Hollywood films

In this section, I will explore those instances where, through the process of *localization* (Androutsopoulos, 2010; see Section 2.2.2), participants modify a particular word and transform it to their local —and, often, vernacular— code. In this way, semiotic mobility allows for cultural signs to travel and be dis-embedded, and subsequently re-embedded, into new social and semiotic contexts (Androutsopoulos, 2010). In the case of this study, cultural signs and artefacts (e.g., dialogues, titles, genres, images, sound, etc.) travel from the films themselves to translocal digital platforms where reviewers not only discuss them, but also appropriate them. *Localizations* will thus be understood here as the clearest example of how a form of entertainment (e.g., Hollywood cinema) can be linguistically modified to a local code. Furthermore, this idea of posts that not only react (negatively, in this case) to what Hollywood offers, but also find new ways of expressing these views, goes against the ideological approach to genre studies, whereby Hollywood's interests manipulate their audiences (see Altman, 1986). On the contrary, this suggests an audience —or a part of it, at least— that does not passively consume whatever is put in front of them, but has its own opinions, reactions and behaviours.

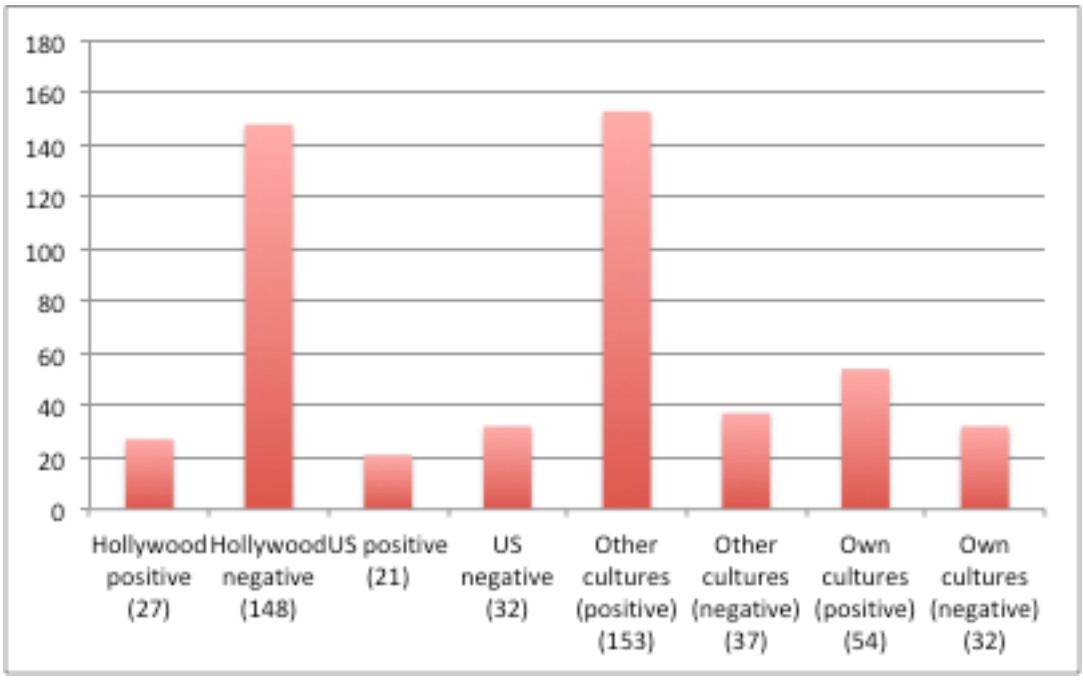
The specific linguistic forms that users choose so as to express their views on Hollywood can also reveal details about those who utter them. In this sense, certain linguistic practices "index, constitute, and entail socio-cultural dimensions" (Ochs, 1996: 425). As we shall see in detail, Ochs also maintains that linguistic forms can index affective stances, epistemic stances, social identity, social acts and social activities.[31]

Some of these linguistic forms encapsulate the aforementioned pejorative view about Hollywood, which tends to be directed particularly at Hollywood blockbusters, a

[31] Social identity, according to Ochs (1996: 410), "encompasses all dimensions of social personae", such as roles (speaker, overhearer, doctor, teacher, etc.), relationships (occupational, kinship, friendship, etc.), group identity (generation, gender, ethnic, class, religious and/or education membership) and rank (employer and employee, titled and untitled people, etc.) among other categories. Social act refers to goal-directed behaviours that are socially recognised, e.g., an offer, a request, etc., whereas social activity has to do with a sequence of two social acts or more, e.g., interviewing, disputing, storytelling, etc.

specific genre that I already listed in Section 5.3. In this sense, Figure 5.14 shows the *References to place* I coded, which I will also explore in Chapter 6. I coded 456 posts out of the 1,822 total as belonging to references to place; 32% of them correspond to reviews where Hollywood is mentioned negatively, while only 5% contain positive allusions.[32] Below, I offer some examples of these occurrences.

Figure 5.14 Coding results for *References to place*



In the review displayed in Example 5.31 for the Hollywood movie *The Best of Me* (translated as *Lo mejor de mí*), the user indexes both an epistemic stance and his/her social identity. The Netflix participant writes that the story *seems* as if it was taken out of a chain of spam email, thereby using what Biber identifies as an epistemic verb that signals likelihood (2006: 92). In terms of the epistemic verb *seem*, as readers, we know that it is not really feasible for a film's plot to be taken out of a chain of spam email (and if it happened, the plot would probably make little sense), but this user chooses to

[32] One of the reasons why these numbers are not higher is because the participants of the three sites review and comment films from all over the world, including South America, North America, Europe and Asia. Nevertheless, when it comes to assessing the film industry of a particular country, the US —and Hollywood— are undoubtedly the most prominent in the data.

compare the film with that type of scenario, thus signalling a strong dislike towards it. This is reinforced by the *zero cinematographic value* that is assigned to the production and the somewhat condescending exercise of telling the rest of the Netflix users that they will only like it if they are 12 years old and in the middle of a pyjama party. Moreover, this user finishes the review by using the verb *choose* as an imperative if the reader fulfills these age and setting 'requirements', thereby placing himself/herself once again as someone who has enough knowledge to state who should watch the film and in what kind of environment.

Secondly, this user also indexes his/her social identity, i.e., his/her culture, by using the linguistic form *pochoclerísima*. The slang term *pochoclero/a* or the more intense *pochoclerísimo/a* stems from the word *pochoclo*, which is how people in Argentina refer to popcorn. In this way, we can see how, as noted in Section 2.2.2, local linguistic choices can still be noticeable within a translocal digital platform such as Netflix LATAM (see Blommaert, 2010; Kytölä, 2015), where people from different Spanish-speaking countries get together.

Example 5.31 - No username or date of publication provided, Netflix LATAM -

La historia parece sacada de una cadena de emails spam… Pochoclerísima, cero valor cinematográfico. Si tenés 12 años y querés ver una película en un pijama party, elegila.

[The story seems as if it was taken out of a chain of spam email… Pochoclerísima, zero cinematographic value. If you're 12 years old and want to watch a film at a pyjama party, choose it].

The mention of popcorn is also significant if we take into account what Gray and Kaklamanidou (2011:5) have said about Hollywood blockbusters, particularly how they are extensively marketed, and, more often than not, how they tend to be perceived by critics as 'fatuous popcorn movies'. In this way, popcorn is associated with the notion of *hamburger culture* (see Section 2.2.2), a pejorative view of the US in general and Hollywood in particular, based on the kind of mega-productions they tend to offer.

Pochoclero/a as a slang term gains relevance in this context, then: as argued in Section 4.7.1, Bucholtz (2009) and Kiesling (2004) have pointed out the extent to which certain slang terms are taken up ideologically, which results in them indexing a particular

stance, whether it is solidarity, masculinity, agreement, summoning, etc. In the case of *pochoclero/a*, and other slang words I will also explore below, the stance that seems to be indexed is one highly critical of Hollywood cinema and its associated cultural symbols.

Lastly, the way in which the poster conjugates verbs is also indexical of this user's sociocultural identity: he/she writes *tenés* instead of *tienes* (second person singular form of *to have*), *querés* instead of *quieres* (second person singular of *to want*) and *elegila* instead of *elígela* (second person singular imperative of *to choose*), which are all characteristics of Argentinian Spanish.[33] Thus, and returning to a differentiation that was already noted in Chapter 2, this participant is doing what Goffman (1956) refers to as *giving off* aspects of his/her identity; instead of directly *giving* a performance that explicitly reveals an element of who this person is, he/she is invoking that through a stylistic choice, which, in this case, is this reviewer's nationality. The user's transportable identity (Zimmerman, 1998; see Section 2.3.2), that is, being from a particular country, is something that travels with people across a multiplicity of situations. Furthermore, there is an interplay between the local and the global in which the local persists through the use of a specific slang term: as Blommaert (2010) and Uimonen (2009) state, the resiliency of the local is one of the key aspects of translocal environments.

The next review, shown in Example 5.32, from Netflix LATAM is about the British film *Paddington* (2014). Yet again, this post presents both an epistemic stance and the notion of *pochoclo* used in association with a particular genre. This reviewer employs the epistemic stance adverb *obviously* (Biber, 2006: 92) to enhance the certainty of his/her view about *Paddington* not being a piece of art, and thereby constructing expertise by deploying such as stance. Moreover, and in a similar way to the previous post, the review ends with the use of an imperative combination of verbs (*keep looking*) if the readers are '*expecting a good animated film*'. Thus, this poster also presents himself/herself as someone who knows what is best for the rest of the Netflix users as far as the circumstances in which *Paddington* should be watched, as well as someone who knows what a good film from that genre should involve, and why *Paddington* would not qualify as one.

[33] People from Uruguay also conjugate verbs in this manner. However, they usually refer to popcorn as *pororó* or *pop* and not *pochoclo*.

On the other hand, and unlike the previous review, *pochoclo* is not a slang term in the sense that it is not an informal expression or restricted to a particular context, but —as explained above— what people in Argentina call *popcorn*. Still, the stance that this user adopts is also present when he/she states that '*Paddington could be entertaining for the pochoclo lovers who don't expect anything other than having some fun*'. Therefore, 'pochoclo' yet again carries a pejorative association with subpar cinematic quality. Nonetheless, what is ironic about this criticism is that the film is not actually from Hollywood, but —as maintained above— from the UK; this reviewer, however, includes it within the genre categorisation of films that are 'pochocleros', i.e., films that may be good enough to pass the time, but which are not up to the standard of, in this case, *Fantastic Mr. Fox* (2009). Furthermore, in what constitutes another parallel with the previous review, this participant conjugates the verb *seguir* (*to continue*) in the second person singular as *seguí* instead of *sigue*, which is how people from Argentina and Uruguay conjugate verbs. Culture, then, plays a key role within these different stances on the view that blockbusters as a genre, or even Hollywood in general, can have, since "the crucial factors that distinguish a genre are not only characteristics inherent in the films themselves; they also depend on the particular culture within which we are operating" (Tudor, 1986: 7). I should note that I am not claiming that every Argentinian viewer will necessarily share the opinion as the user in Example 5.32; rather, what this review shows is an instance whereby someone with a particular sociocultural identity frames his/her view in a particular way that expresses a negative evaluation through the use of the word *pochoclo* [*popcorn*]. Thus, the stances that users in the data have towards Hollywood, or films that feel like Hollywood cinema such as *Paddington*, will be expressed in particular ways depending on their sociocultural identity.

Example 5.32 - No username or date of publication provided, Netflix LATAM -

Para mí tres estrellas es "película promedio" que es lo que es Paddington. Le veo un intento de querer ser algo como Fantastic Mr Fox de Wes Anderson, pero no llega. Baches de guión, le falta consistencia al universo del film, obviamente no es una obra de arte. Aún así, puede ser pasatista para los amantes del pochoclo que no esperan otra cosa que algo que los entretenga; ahora, si estás esperando una buena película de animación, seguí de largo.

[To me, three stars means 'average film', which is what Paddington is. I see an attempt to try to be something like Fantastic Mr. Fox by Wes Anderson, but it doesn't get there. Script flaws, the film's universe lacks consistency, it obviously isn't an art piece. Still, it can be entertaining for the pochoclo lovers who don't expect anything other than having some fun; now, if you're expecting a good animated film, keep looking].

A similar type of occurrence can be found in Example 5.33 as well. In fact, here *popcorn* is also transformed to another slang term that also works as an adjective, *palomera*. Countries such as Honduras, Panama, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Mexico and El Salvador refer to popcorn as *palomitas de maíz*, hence the transformation to *palomera*. Among the reviews of the aforementioned *The Best of Me*, a participant writes:

Example 5.33 - No username or date of publication provided, Netflix LATAM -

Película mala, aburrida y sobre todo, bastante predecible, hay pelis palomeras muy divertidas pero este es un reverendo churrote.

[*Bad film, boring and, above anything else, very predictable, there are very entertaining movies that are palomeras, but this one is quite cheesy]*.

Much like *pochoclero/a*, the slang term *palomero/a* also indexes a pejorative stance towards a Hollywood production like *The Best of Me*. At the same time, it tells us something about this user's sociocultural identity, placing him/her somewhere between North America (Mexico) and Central America (Honduras, Panama, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, El Salvador) due to the use of this term. Interestingly, this post prompts the reply of a participant who expresses his/her disagreement, but actually concedes that the movie is indeed *palomera*, thereby not only agreeing with other reviewers' evaluation, but also deploying this slang term so as to convey that, even though the film may have its faults, it is still entertaining.

Example 5.34 - No username or date of publication provided, Netflix LATAM -

Es una pelicula palomera, churresca, pero es divertido como se torna todo en una tormenta de malas situaciones, es una pelicula tipica, pero… es divertido el contenido. Si no esperas NADA de la película lo disfrutaras, me pase un buen rato y pore so le di 4 estrellas.

[*It's a palomera movie, cheesy, but it's funny how everything turns into a storm of bad situations, it's your typical kind of film but… the content is entertaining. If you don't expect ANYTHING from this film, you'll enjoy it, I had a good time and that's why I gave it 4 stars]*.

The film being *palomera* is not the only concession that this user makes. There is also the acknowledgement of *The Best of Me* being '*your typical kind of film*', which goes back to another frequent critique of Hollywood cinema: its alleged tendency to be formulaic (Sardar & Davies, 2002). In addition, there is also the recommendation to not expect 'ANYTHING' —emphasised with capital letters— in order to enjoy it. Having said all this, this reviewer employs one of the affordances that Netflix provides and gives it 4 stars out of 5. Therefore, users such as the above may admit that a given movie has flaws such as being *palomera*, but the association between this slang term and its potential pejorative stance seems to be negotiated to an extent, in so far as this user is still able to find some saving grace for the film.

Conversely, the Netflix LATAM reviewer in Example 5.35 —while evaluating the Mexican movie *Cásese quien pueda* (2014)— does the opposite by disagreeing with the rest of the users who deemed this film *palomero*, and even insults them:

Example 5.35 - No username or date of publication provided, Netflix LATAM -

No hagan caso a la gente estúpida que dice que es un churro palomero, que es lo peor que han visto, que perdieron su tiempo, que es predecible, etc. La película es buena para recostarse en el sofá y verla de principio a fin y reírse sanamente de las pendejadas que salen cada rato. Martha Higareda enseña lo que sabe enseñar y eso se le agradece.

[*Don't pay attention to the stupid people who say that this film is cheesy and palomero, that it's the worst thing they've seen, that they wasted their time, that it's predictable, etc. The movie is good to lie down on the couch and watch from beginning to end and laugh at the absurd things that happen. Martha Higareda shows what she should show and that's appreciated]*.

This participant calls those who expressed this opinion '*stupid people*' and diminishes their view by telling the rest of the audience to ignore their perception. Unlike the previous poster, the fact that the slang term *palomero/a* was used to assign a pejorative stance to this film not only triggers this Netflix participant's disagreement, but also

his/her anger. Furthermore, and much like in several posts in this chapter, this reviewer tells his/her readers what to do, instead of suggesting it, by using the imperative ('*Don't pay attention to the stupid people*…'). By doing so, this participant involves the rest of the reviewers in his/her review, an act that brings to the fore the fact that negotiating stances is bound to be a common practice within communities where opinions are shared. In the next section, I will argue how the sites' design plays a key role in shaping the way in which these negotiations occur, and how references to either specific genres or reactions to genres are part of these postings.

5.5 Negotiating expertise through genre

As noted in Chapter 2, one of the main tenets of Goffman's seminal work on self-presentation relates to the notion of *performance,* which not only encompasses the activity that takes place during the continuous presence of a particular individual in front of specific set of observers, but also the influence that this activity has on the observers (1956: 13). Thus, aside from analysing the ways in which the users in my data perform their identity as experts, it is also important to study how these performances are taken up. In this sense, the negotiation of the expert identity in the data is influenced by the design of the sites: media affordances not only shape user's *subjectivity* (i.e., their self-presentation), but also their *intersubjectivity* (i.e., their interaction with others) (Georgakopoulou, 2016: 180). In the next section, I will discuss the extent to which these platforms offer affordances (rating other people's reviews, quoting other posts, etc.), as well as constraints (e.g., inability to provide personal information on Netflix or to tag other users on all three platforms), that shape the way in which these interactions occur.

5.5.1 Alignment with other users

In Section 2.4.2, I stressed that the notion of alignment represents a fruitful aspect to study within digital platforms (Georgakopoulou, 2016). In that same section, I also pointed out the extent to which alignment is directly related to participation frameworks

(Goffman, 1981), i.e., the different roles and statutes that people undertake when they communicate.[34] Furthermore, the design of these online environments can shape the ways in which alignments are achieved (Georgakopoulou, 2016). In this sense, the sites I analysed show certain constraints as compared to platforms such as Facebook or Twitter, but they also present affordances that are similar to the ones on those sites. With regard to the latter, I will show how 'liking' other people's posts is an affordance available on Netflix, and how references to genre are present among the reviews with more 'likes' among the data.

As explained in Section 3.2.3, Netflix users have three options when they read another member's review: stating whether it was 'useful', 'not useful', or 'inappropriate'. When the first scenario happens, and as shown at the bottom of Figure 5.15 below, the site indicates how many users deemed the post useful out of a total. In this case, 33 out of 40 people shared this opinion, which means the remaining seven are the ones who voted for it being 'not useful', hence the sum getting to 40. If one chooses the third option, the system asks whether the review contained 'unacceptable language or content'; if it included detailed information about the plot; and, finally, it gives one the possibility of maintaining that the review was inappropriate because 'it is not a review'.

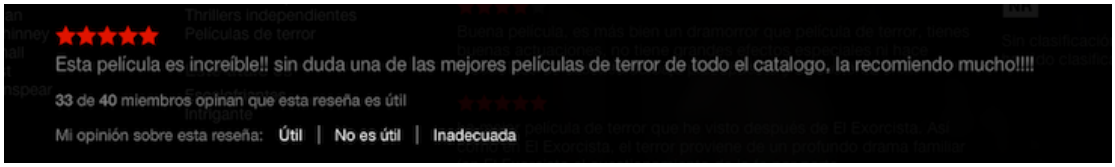
In this way, a review that is considered 'useful' by other people will gain a certain status when compared to other posts that may have not received the same reaction, since other users of the site will highlight it in a positive manner. In the opposite situation, it is not always easy to see why a given review may not have received much validation. Taking into account that Netflix does not disclose when a certain film or TV show was uploaded to their catalogue, and since the reviews do not have a date of publication, it is difficult to tell whether the lack of positive ratings for a particular review could have to with it having been posted too recently. In other words, it would be similar to when someone posts something on other platforms and there is a period of time when no one has yet responded. A good solution for this uncertainty was to look at the other reviews for the same movie: if they had gathered several positive ratings, that suggested that the reason why others did not receive such an evaluation did not necessarily have to do with an issue of recency.

[34] One of the key ways in which this alignment is achieved is the notion of *knowing participation* (Georgakopoulou, 2016: 182). I will focus on this concept in Chapter 6, when I discuss the ways in which users tell and co-construct narratives in the data.

Another important aspect of the post shown in Figure 5.15 is that this review of the film *The Babadook* received the largest amount of positive evaluations within the data, followed by 28 out of 32 for *La peor noche de mi vida* [*Walk of Shame*]; 28 out of 33 for *Lo mejor de mí* [*The Best of Me*]; 27 out of 27 participants (i.e., every user that rated this post) for *Paddington*; and 27 out of 29 for *La cultura del porro* [*The Culture High*].

As stated above, all of them involve references to genre, either to the genres themselves (e.g., a comedy, a horror film, etc.) or to how they reacted to them (e.g., whether they though a comedy was funny, if a drama made them cry, etc.). Indeed, after deeming this film *incredible*, this reviewer situates *The Babadook* as one of the best horror films that Netflix LATAM offers, which implies a strong familiarity with the other movies from the same genre that the site provides. Moreover, this statement is accompanied by the stance adverb *undoubtedly*, which indicates a high level of certainty (Biber, 2006: 92). Finally, this reviewer ends his/her post by recommending it to the other users, with an emphasis that is signalled not only textually (*a lot*), but also through the repetition of exclamation marks, and by giving it five stars out of five, thereby employing one of the affordances of the site.

Figure 5.15 Screenshot of Netflix review ("Esta película es increíble…")



[*This film is incredible!! undoubtedly one of the best horror movies of the whole catalogue, I recommend it a lot!!!!*].

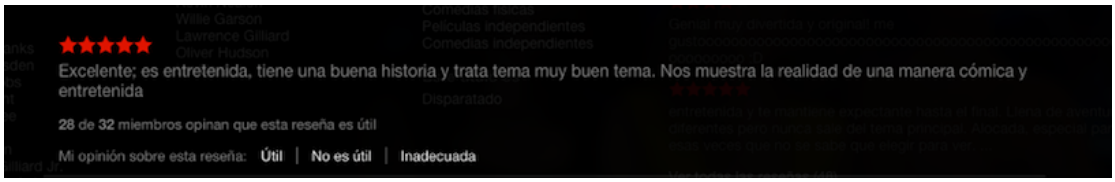
- No username or date of publication provided, Netflix LATAM-

This post, as well as the rest of the reviews that gathered more 'likes' on the Netflix LATAM data, is highly positive. Even though there is no way of establishing a proper correlation between positive reviews/positive responses from Netflix users, especially since I could not get in touch with the participants (see Section 3.6.1), at least in these five examples, there seems to be a good reaction to reviews filled with praise towards

the films in question, as well as a noticeable absence of negative evaluations. Despite the fact that this review shares the aforementioned similarity with the other posts, i.e., giving the film in question five stars, there is also an important difference: the construction of expertise is less noticeable. In this sense, the reference to 'the story' offers a glimpse into a more specific element of the film that is evaluated positively, and it also supposes that this user has enough background knowledge to distinguish what makes a plot good or bad. Aside from that, there are no signs of the other aspects I have pinpointed as belonging to an implicit (or explicit) construction of expertise, whether it is comparisons to other films of the same genre; mentions of the movie's technical aspects; references to an actor/director/writer's filmography; or a lexico-grammatical feature that could suggest that this Netflix participant is reasonably certain about what he/she is stating.

Another difference with the previous review is the fact that the reference to genre here is not direct. *La peor noche de mi vida* [*Walk of Shame*] is a comedy, which is why this user points out the story here is told *in a funny and fun way*. The reference to genre here is therefore expressed in terms of the reviewer's reaction to a comedy, but not as reflection on where this particular film stands when compared to others of the same genre (e.g., good, bad, amongst the best or worst ever, etc.).

Figure 5.16 Screenshot of Netflix review ("Excelente; es entretenida…")



[*Excellent; it's entertaining, has a good story and deals with a very good topic. It shows us reality in a funny and fun way*].

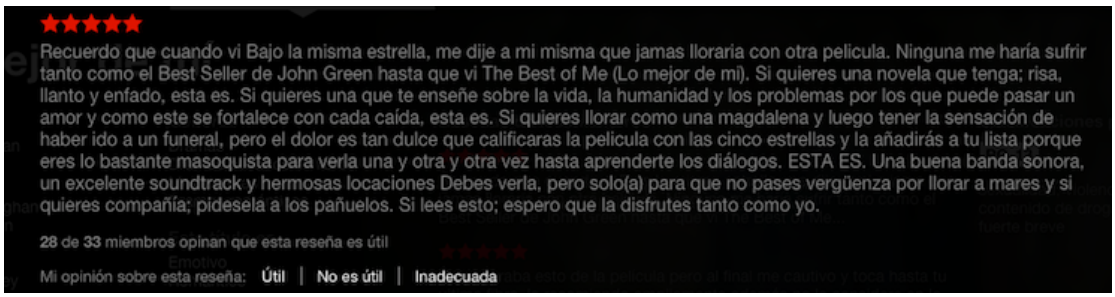
- No username or date of publication provided, Netflix LATAM-

Continuing with this pattern of positive evaluations receiving the most 'likes' by other users, Figure 5.17 also shows a reviewer giving a film (*Lo mejor de mí* [*The Best of*

Me]) a noticeably positive evaluation, which can be seen by looking at the amount of stars it was given. In turn, the review received a large amount of 'likes': 28 out of 33 people aligned with this post. Another point in common with the previous example is that the reference to genre is subtle. This film is classified as a drama on Netflix —and as a 'Drama' and a 'Romance' on IMDb's website— and the way in which this specific genre is experienced by this user can be observed by the personal feelings it triggers, e.g., pain, sadness, etc.

Similarly to what occurred in some of the posts in Section 5.2, the language use of this participant allows us to notice that she is a woman; for instance, she writes '*me dije a mí misma*' ['*I told myself*'] and not *me* '*dije a mí mismo*', that is, she uses the female pronoun. Interestingly, and bringing expertise back to the forefront, this reviewer also tells the readers *how* to watch the film and why, but instead of being ignored or voted 'not useful', this suggestion —and the post as a whole— is one of the Top 3 best-rated by the other users in the data.

Figure 5.17 Screenshot of Netflix review ("Recuerdo que cuando vi…")

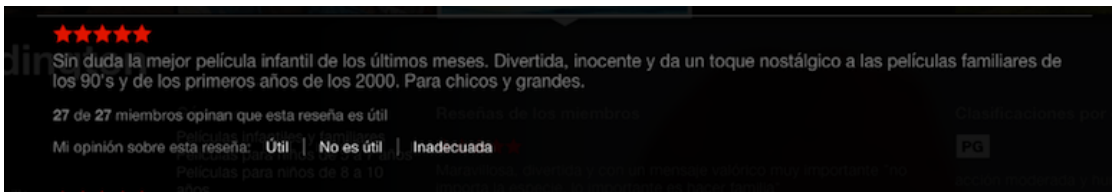


[*I remember that when I watched The Fault in Our Stars, I told myself that I would never cry because of another film. No film would make me suffer like the Best Seller from John Green until I saw The Best of Me. If you want a novel that has; laughter, tears and anger, this is it. If you want something that teaches you about life, humanity and the problems that a romance can go through and how it strengthens with every fall, this is it. If you want to cry your eyes out and then feel as if you had gone to a funeral, but the pain is so sweet that you will rate the movie with five stars and add it to your list because you are enough of a masochist to watch it again and again until you learn the dialogue, THIS IS IT. A good score, an excellent soundtrack and beautiful locations You must see it, but alone so you don't feel embarrassed by crying so much and if you want some company; that is what the tissues are for. If you read this; I hope you enjoy it as much I did*].

- No username or date of publication provided, Netflix LATAM-

While the self-presentation of the reviewer in the post above is as someone who is quite familiar with the experience of watching one particular film, having done so more than once, in the case of Figure 5.18 below, genre appears at the forefront of the way in which knowledge is demonstrated. In this sense, we can see a reference to genre —children's films— and a statement about *Paddington* being the best film of that kind over a period of time, i.e., '*the last few months*'. In a similar vein, this reviewer also likens the movie to children' films of a longer period —a decade, the 1990s, and the first few years of this century—, a comparison that implies having seen movies from that period that belong to that category. Furthermore, as happens in Figure 5.15, this post also contains *sin duda/undoubtedly*, an epistemic stance adverb that marks a high degree of certainty (Biber, 2006: 92), thereby constructing expertise through the deployment of this stance.

Figure 5.18 Screenshot of Netflix review ("Sin duda la mejor película infantil…")



[*Undoubtedly the best children's film of the last few months. Funny, innocent and it has a nostalgic nod to the family movies of the 90s and the first years of the 2000s. For kids and adults*].

- No username or date of publication provided, Netflix LATAM-

Finally, yet another positive evaluation —this time about *La cultura del porro* [*The Culture High*]— also presents a high level of alignment. As Figure 5.19 indicates, 27 members thought it was useful. This Netflix participant gives the film five stars, as in all other cases shown in this section, and the post begins with the same adjective as Figure 5. 16 did (*excellent*). What is more, said adjective is accompanied by the genre of the film at hand, which is a documentary. This means that, as was the case for Figure 5. 16, the way in which genre is alluded to here is in a descriptive manner. However,

this user does present himself/herself as knowledgeable on marijuana, the topic that the documentary explores: in addition to outright recommending it '*for those who have an open mind*', there is an invitation for those who allegedly do not have an open mind to '*finally open it*'.

Figure 5.19 Screenshot of Netflix review ("Excelente documental…")

[*Excellent documentary that involves politics, pharmaceutics and the media and how they have left society caught up in bad information and ignorance. I recommend it for those who have an open mind and for those who don't so they can finally open it*].

- No username or date of publication provided, Netflix LATAM-

Having gone through these reviews where the affordance of rating people's contributions was used, one element that appears in every one of these reviews is some kind of reference to genre, e.g., their quality when compared to other movies of the same genre (Figures 5.15 and 5.18), if a reviewer thought that a comedy was funny (Figure 5.16) or if a drama made them cry repeatedly (Figure 5.17), and finally, by describing its quality, accompanied by an adjective (Figure 5.19). Even though the data does not suggest that there is a definite correlation between most-liked reviews and references to genre, genre does represent a common denominator throughout these posts.

These reviews also have other aspects in common. One feature that runs across all of them is the fact that they are highly positive evaluations, whereby another affordance the site offers is employed to give each of these movies five stars. Moreover, the language used to appraise them is accordingly encouraging, through adjectives such as *excellent*, *entertaining*, *incredible* and *beautiful*. Conversely, and unlike other platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, etc., users can only validate someone else's post and not respond to them directly. As already stated, IMDb and HiFi Chile do not offer this

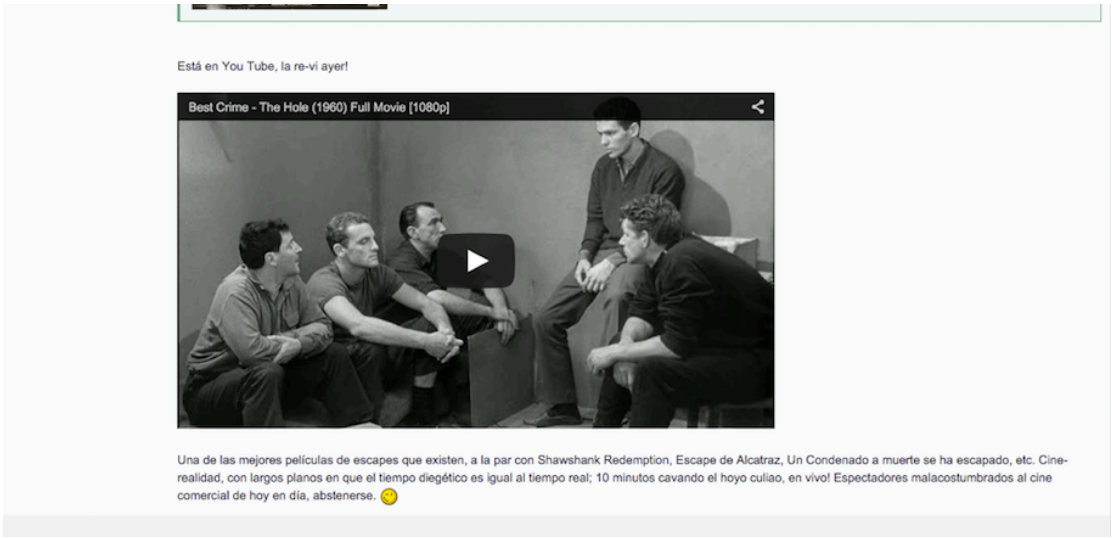
alternative to their users; they do however, provide them with a quoting tool. Fittingly, Page (2012b: 35) includes users quoting one another on discussion forums as a signal of interpersonal alignment.

As I maintained in Section 3.2.5, IMDb users have an option aside from quoting that also signals who they are engaging with. When they reply to a user, the post moves a few spaces to the right of the post they are responding to. Figure 5.20 shows an occurrence of this, wherein the boxes of text start moving to the right, thus signalling an interaction. Furthermore, and going back to the notion of emerging categorisations (see Section 5.4,) this post features one user attacking another for having '*a pathetic, hipster list of movies*'. The remarkable aspect of this is that this post is one of the direct attacks to a specific user that were coded as *Aggressive* for *Tone*: as noted (see Section 4.2), these instances are noticeably less salient than amicable posts in the data, which shows a predominance of occurrences where online conviviality seems to be pursued (Tagg, Seargeant & Brown, 2017). In fact, in what reinforces the predominantly amicable tone of these three communities, another user—not the one whose list was insulted— joins the fray and defends the participant who had been disrespected.

Figure 5.20 Screenshot of IMDb exchange ("First time viewing…")

In the case of examples of actual quoting, Figure 5.21 presents an instance in which knowledge about a film of a particular genre is shared. User *Richard de Saint Germain* employs the quoting tool to engage with another participant who had discussed having seen the film *The Hole* (1960) and liking it. *Richard de Saint Germain* not only aligns with this stance, but also shares the link for the full movie within the review, thereby employing another affordance provided by the site. This participant shows his knowledge of the genre by identifying it as an *escape film,* and by drawing comparisons to other movies that belong to the same category. Finally, there is also an engagement with people who tend to enjoy commercial films: the advice is to refrain from watching this classic film, which is followed by a smiley face.

Figure 5.21 Screenshot of HiFi Chile review ("Está en YouTube"…)



It's on YouTube, I re-watched it yesterday!

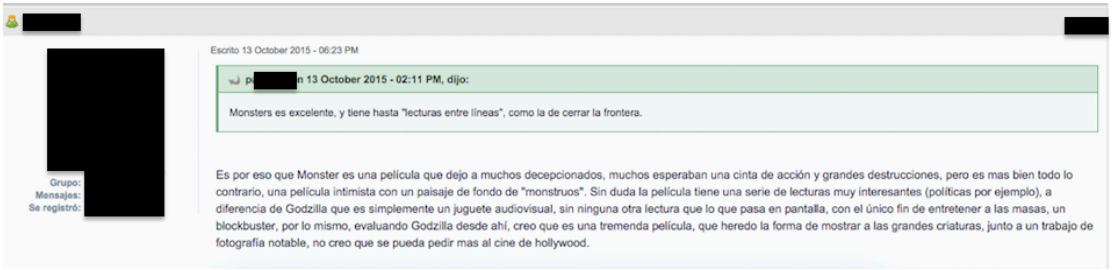
One of the best escape films out there, on the level of Shawshank Redemption, Escape from Alcatraz, A Man Escaped, etc. Reality-cinema, with long shots in which the diegetic time is the same as the real time; 10 minutes digging the fucking hole live! Spectators who have been spoiled by today's commercial cinema, avoid :)].

- *Richard de Saint Germain*, 14 December, 2015, HiFi Chile-

Another example of quoting and references to genre can be found in Figure 5.22, where user *césar* quotes another participant who had praised the film *Monster* and expands on

the positive aspects of said movie, juxtaposing it with the action blockbuster *Godzilla* (2014). In terms of the latter film, this reviewer comes to a similar conclusion than others in the data (see Section 5.4.2): a Hollywood blockbuster can be good if one knows what to expect from it. Thus, this reinforces the idea of audiences coming with certain expectations to the film-watching experience due to their familiarity with genres and whether those expectations will be met or not (Langford, 2005; Schatz, 1981; Tudor, 1986).

Figure 5.22 Screenshot of HiFi Chile review ("Es por eso que Monster…")



[*That's why Monster is a film that left many people disappointed, many expected an action film with destruction all around, but it's rather the opposite, an intimate movie with a background scene of "monsters". The film undoubtedly has several interesting interpretations (political for instance), unlike Godzilla which is basically an audiovisual toy, without any other layer than what's happening on the screen, with the sole purpose of entertaining the masses, a blockbuster, if we evaluate Godzilla from that perspective, I think it's a terrific movie, which inherited the way in which it shows big creatures, coupled with remarkable photographic work, I don't think we can ask more from Hollywood cinema*].

-césar, 13 October 2015, HiFi Chile-

In summary, the way in which a site is designed can play a crucial role when it comes to how users align or misalign with others and the extent to which opinions are shared and negotiated in different forms, which do not necessarily include text, e.g., liking someone else's contribution by clicking a button or quoting another participant. Because of the focus of this chapter, I concentrated on instances in which users negotiate their expertise through discussions of genre by employing the aforementioned affordances**.** This is not to say that references to genre are the only way by which users align with others in the data: as I argue in the following chapter, storytelling represents another scenario in which shared knowledge gives way to instances of knowing participation.

5.6 Conclusions

The research question I focused on answering in this chapter was:

In what ways do users deploy references to cinematic genres in order to construct expertise?

The findings can be divided into three patterns, much like the ones in the previous chapter. The first is the ways in which traditional genres are mentioned, namely as a way to show knowledge about a particular category of movies. Moreover, the findings align with the literature on genre, which points out how viewers' expectations and hypotheses play a key role in the experience of watching these films and their respective genres. In this way, experience once again is placed at the forefront of the analysis (see also chapters 4 and 6). When it comes to genre, cumulative experience is intrinsically linked to knowledge and, thus, to expertise: users grow to expect something from a particular genre after repeated viewings of films that belong to that category and show this degree of familiarity when they write about them. Experience, then, continues to play a multifaceted role within constructions of expertise.

The second pattern relates to participants not being passive individuals who merely consume what is offered to them, but active spectators who, on the one hand, bring their own set of expectations to the film-watching experience and, on the other, tend to categorise certain films in terms of their quality. In this context, two elements play an essential role: the notion of time and Hollywood cinema. In the case of the former, this is associated with films being deemed good to pass the time, good for a Sunday, good to spend some family time, and others that will make the audience waste their time. On the other hand, a pattern that emerges with regard to Hollywood is the pejorative view that users in the data tend to have not only of the specific genre of action blockbusters, but also of Hollywood as a category of cinema in itself. This rejection can manifest itself through the use of localizations, some of them in the form of slang terms, which index both the participants' stances and also aspects of their social identities.

The third pattern involves the extent to which the affordances that digital platforms offer shape the way in which alignments are achieved (Georgakopoulou, 2016) and how that relates to genre. Even though IMDb, Netflix, and HiFi Chile offer a more reduced variety of affordances than sites such as Facebook or YouTube, Netflix participants can

still align with other user's opinion by liking their reviews, whereas IMDb and HiFi Chile members can quote their peers and also align with specific stances. In the case of liking other participants' reviews, genre is yet again present in a way that shows a degree of knowledge of the cinematic category at hand. In this sense, it is important to reiterate that all the 'most successful' reviews, in terms of receiving the higher number of likes, involve references to genre to some extent; nevertheless, a purely quantitative approach to this issue would be needed to establish a direct correlation between 'successful' posts and references to genre, which would in turn depart from the mixed-method perspective I undertake in this thesis.

Finally, even though my findings align with previous research on the conception of audiences as active participants rather than passive, and with implicit constructions of expertise being more salient than their explicit counterparts, referencing genre has not been reported as one of these implicit strategies when it comes to online reviews (cf. Mackiewicz, 2010; Vásquez, 2013, 2014a).

Chapter 6: Narratives of film-watching personal experiences

6.1 Introduction

I have argued throughout the previous chapters that displaying background knowledge is an essential element for the discursive construction of expertise in the data. The findings discussed in Chapter 4 already pointed towards the salience, from a quantitative perspective, of words such as *rewatch* and *viewings*, which are related to users reviewing films that they have seen multiple times. In this chapter, I argue that reviews of this kind usually involve a narrative about the film-watching experience. As Harrison and Barlow (2009) note in their own research on users who suffer from arthritis and give advice to one another online, sharing personal experiences not only enhanced the participants' identity as knowledgeable on that specific subject, but also allowed them to find common ground in terms of having gone through similar events. Thurnherr, von Rohr and Locher (2016: 458) note how forum members resort to narrative passages "to write their expertise or credibility into being". Thus, stories on digital platforms can become "important discursive and social resources that create identities for their tellers and audiences" (Page, 2012b: 1).

When it comes to stories, this kind of knowledge is shared (see Section 6.4), which not only allows users to align with others, but also to demonstrate how familiar they are with the topic at hand. The circumstances of said experience may differ (when/where they watched it, whether they liked it, etc.), but what brings these narratives together is the fact they are about the same motion pictures. In this sense, a story within the context of an online review will be understood as what occurs when users place themselves and their "own experiences and perspectives at the centre of the text" (Vásquez, 2014a: 151).

Two of the three sites in the data are discussion forums, whereas Netflix would not fall into that category (see Section 3.2), since the platform does not offer its users a tool to textually reply to other contributions (although the participants do find ways to refer to other people's specific contributions). The importance that this has from a narrative standpoint is that a discussion forum "reshapes the narrative dimensions of tellership, with a particular focus on the sequenced storytelling that emerges through dialogue

between forum members" (Page, 2012b: 24). Thus, several narratives in the data are then complemented by the stories that users tell in relation to the same film: what starts as a personal account gives way to other users offering their own narratives, a scenario that makes sense if we bear in mind that "personal stories are inevitably other people's stories" (Shuman, 2005: 151).

These narratives, moreover, can be very different from one another in terms of their length, their content, etc. even within the same data (cf. Thurnherr, Rudolf von Rohr & Locher, 2016; Vásquez, 2014a), but the object of analysis from which they were all studied in this chapter is storytelling as a communicative/interactional process, that is, the interactional processes and social practices by which participants engage in narratives (De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2015: 24-25). Consequently, these narratives are used to discursively construct the identity of someone who possesses background knowledge on cinema, supported by people experiences and trajectories with specific films; in this case, by the online reviewers' own experiences and trajectories. Within these interactions, a key factor has to do with the sense of *online conviviality* (Tagg, Seargeant & Brown, 2017) that permeates the three sites (see Section 4.2): it is through this desire for peaceful coexistence that storytelling emerges.

The research question that I explore in this chapter is:

What role do narratives play in the discursive construction of 'expert' identities?

The methodological approach that I take combines narrative analysis, coding, and the application of ethnographic principles. The small stories framework (see Section 3.6.4) involved making the conscious decision to pay attention to stories that can be fragmented, co-constructed, and consisting of shared events, thus recognising them as a way in which users construct expertise by showing their trajectories with particular films. It is within this analytical framework that I coded specific types of narratives (see Sections 6.3 and 6.4), with *multiple-viewing stories* and *second stories* being the most prominent. Drawing on ethnographic principles allowed me to identify specific patterns of interactions within these communities wherein, for instance, members of IMDb use narratives as a way of keeping the discussion going as part of their role as Original Posters (see Sections 6.2 and 6.4).

In Section 6.2, I argue that narratives of film-watching experience constitute a type of small story, as well as analysing the role that time and place play in them. Section 6.3

focuses on a particular kind of narrative in the data, multiple-viewing stories. In Section 6.4, I look at the ways in which users co-construct narratives, namely through second stories and collective remembering. Finally, in Section 6.5, I offer the concluding remarks for this chapter.

With these findings, I intend to contribute to research on online storytelling, which has been described as "still relatively virgin territory, particularly from a sociolinguistic and discourse analytic perspective" (De Fina, 2016: 474). I also aim to contribute to the relative scarcity of analyses that explore digital narratives in Spanish (see Section 1.2). Specifically, the findings depart from previous studies on online film reviews (cf. Vásquez, 2014a), which view this type of posts as *less narrative* than reviews about restaurants, hotels, etc. and where only some users choose to "compose review texts in the form of a narrative of personal experience" (Vásquez, 2014a: 150). My analysis of the data, on the other hand, suggests that reviews about cinema can lend themselves to tellings of personal experiences in relation to the films in question, which, as noted above, can be divided into *multiple-viewing stories, second stories*, and instances of collective remembering. Furthermore, I apply the concept of knowing participation (Georgakopoulou, 2016) to analyse the ways in which users in the data shape their shared knowledge by exchanging their experiences with particular films.

6.2 Film-watching narratives as small stories

The difference between *big* and *small stories* was already explored in Section 3.6.4, but I recapitulate here why I argue that narratives in the data belong to the latter category.[35] Firstly, they are closer to everyday, mundane tellings —i.e., world-making— than to narratives of complications in a particular person's life, that is, a world-disruption. Secondly, several of them are co-constructed by the users in the data instead of consisting of a single teller, a process whereby knowing participation plays an essential role (see Section 6.4). Moreover, they can be fragmented and fleeting. These stories are also not elicited in a scenario such as an interview, with the intention of getting the

[35] Page (2018), drawing on Herman and Vervaeck (2005) and Hutcheon (2006), criticises the structuralist definition of narrative as separate from stories, i.e., as a story being an event or sequence of events, and narrative discourse relating the representation of these events (see Porter Abbott, 2002: 16). Page argues that this distinction is too narrow, which is why she uses *narrative* and *story* interchangeably, a decision I follow in this thesis.

individual to self-reflect. On the contrary, users tend to share their stories without having someone else prompting them to do so. With these characteristics in mind, I coded 787 posts out of 1,822 that incorporated "some account, or story, of personal experience" (Vásquez, 2014a: 140). In other words, I coded posts where the reviewers position themselves and their experiences at the centre of the text (see Section 6.1) As I argue throughout this chapter, while this is less than half of the total of posts, it still departs from the notion of a type of online review where narratives constitute a few exceptions rather than a noticeable pattern in film reviews (cf. Vásquez, 2014a).

Among the elements pinpointed in the above paragraph, something that will be prevalent throughout the sections of this chapter (particularly in Section 6.4) is the co-construction of narratives in the data. As I maintain, the particular participation frameworks (Goffman, 1981) of the communities in the data shape how certain narratives are told. For instance, on IMDb, users take turns on a weekly basis to act as Original Posters (OPs), which means that they have to start the discussion and then keep replying to other people's reviews, depending, of course, on whether they have watched the other films being evaluated or not (see Section 3.2.5 for more details). It is within this participation framework of users interacting with the OP of the week that, in Example 6.1, participant *Ounces_of_Ox* replies to that week's OP, who had written about *Minions*, the spin-off that stemmed from the animated *Despicable Me* films. *Ounces_of_Ox* starts the post by greeting the OP, whose name is changed here to *Iris*, teases him by referring to him as 'the Villanous' and then proceeds to discuss the films that the OP mentioned.

Example 6.1 - *Ounces of Ox*, 22 November 2015, IMDb –

Mornin' [Iris] the Villainous,

Haven't seen either of yours. My daughter gives Minions two chocolate-stained thumbs up.

This is merely a small glimpse into this user's life, *small* being the key word. Although short in length, this disclosure provides several clues of a particular personal experience: namely, that this participant is a parent, that the daughter likes the *Minions* saga and, probably, that she likes chocolate. At the same time, by mentioning 'two thumbs up' as a form of approval, this user invokes a phrase popularised by

professional film critics Gene Siskel and Robert Ebert, who either gave films two thumbs down, one thumb down, one thumb up or two thumbs up if they were very good. Thus, this participant appropriates a discourse commonly used by 'media people' (Couldry, 2003).

An essential element of the narratives in the data is the role that time and space play in them, namely in terms of how they build the participants' identities through storytelling, which is what I focus on in the next section.

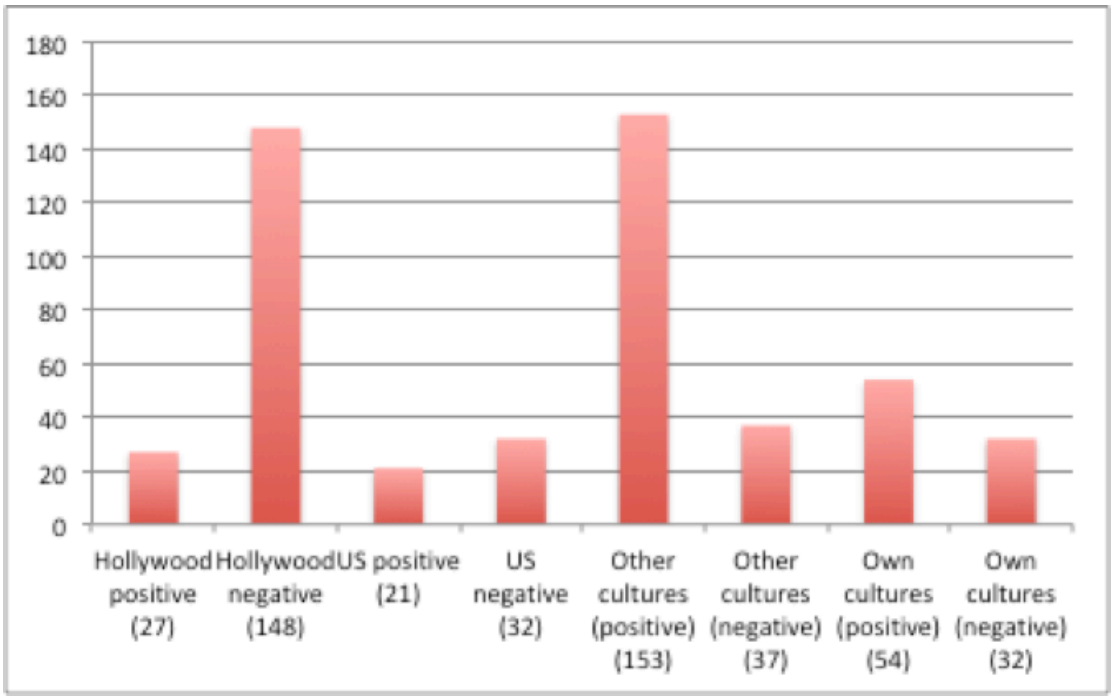
6.2.1 The role of time and space

Three of the aspects I coded —*Stories*, *References to time*, and *References to place*— are intertwined, although not all references to time and space in the data are embedded into narratives. An aspect of Figure 5.12 I already highlighted is how references to recent events (i.e., those that occurred within a month before the post was written) surpass references to remote events (i.e., those that took place more than a month before the post was shared), but the margin between them is not particularly wide (i.e., 404 instances again 344). The fact that remote events do not constitute exceptions in the data seems to echo the importance that digital communication researchers have given to how people discuss past events online, including performances of nostalgia (Georgalou, 2015; Heyd & Honkanen, 2015; Vásquez, 2015). As I show throughout this chapter (see sections 6.3 and 6.4), references to the remote past often involve users including different aspects of their lives (e.g., memories of places, times, people, etc.) into the experiences they share with other members of the sites.

Figure 6.1, on the other hand, once again shows the coding results for *Reference to place*. As noted (see Section 3.6.3), I coded *place* as any reference to a geographical location. Furthermore, I opted for the broader notion of *cultures* rather than *countries* because some mentions may involve regions such as Latin America or Asia. Out of the 504 posts that were coded, positive or neutral references to other cultures are the most frequent, followed by negative opinions about Hollywood (see Section 5.4.2). It should be noted that positive comments on other cultures often refer to the countries where the films being were made. For instance, reviewers may praise a Danish film and then go on to say that Danish people approach film in a much more subtle way than Hollywood, or

other participants (namely, from HiFi Chile) might point out how Argentinian cinema never disappoints, afterwards extending this compliment to an alleged artistic superiority that Argentina has over other countries in Latin America. Having said that, when it comes to places within narratives specifically, many of them revolve around references to places in people's own cultures (countries, cities, streets, etc.) that play a part in the users' narratives of their own lives and which are not told in a negative way, that is, they do not involve criticism towards that user's culture and its cinema.

Figure 6.1 Coding results for *References to place*



When embedded into narratives, the concepts of time and place can shed light on the teller's identity. In relation to time, reviewers tend to mention the expectations they had about films *before* seeing them and the stance they report as having about them *during* or *after* the film-watching experience, a finding that aligns with other work on narratives in online reviews (see Vásquez, 2014a). As argued above (see Chapter 5), films audiences' expectations are shaped by the repeated experience of watching films with certain characteristics (e.g., a specific genre, the work of a particular film director

or actor, etc.), which in turn increase the familiarity that reviewers have, and show, towards cinema.

In light of the above, Examples 6.2 to 6.4 focus on reviewers placing both themselves and their own experiences at the centre of the text, particularly in terms of how the stories begin with the events that took place *before* the users actually started watching the film. In this way, there is a progression of events, i.e., expectation before watching the film/reaction during the film/final evaluation, which shows time passing within the personal experience told in the review.

In Example 6.2, the IMDb review of the 2015 film *Bridge of Spies* begins with member *Stasiak02* giving the movie 9 stars out of 10. After emphasising how quickly time passed while watching it (more on that later), *Stasiak02* notes that *we* mostly know what will take place in the film, which is because *Bridge of Spies* is based on real events. This user also shows a sense of familiarity —and, thus, a construction of expertise— with both Steven Spielberg's work as a director and Tom Hanks' career as an actor through references of what he/she does not particularly like about some of the former's other work and how the character in this film suits the latter well. In addition, this participant inserts elements of his/her personal experience of having watched the film into the post, as well as the extent to which time and place play a role in it. First, as mentioned, *Stasiak02* points out how the two hours and a half that the film lasts *flew by*. This user shares how he/she felt while watching the movie, i.e., as being transported both in space (Brooklyn, Berlin) and time (to the 1950s). These references to time and place are, thus, embedded into the story this user tells with respect to his/her personal experience watching *Bridge of Spies*, in which he shows his/her expertise regarding Steven Spielberg's body of work as a filmmaker.

Example 6.2 - *Stasiak02*, 29 November 2015, IMDb -

Bridge of Spies (2015), Steven Spielberg - 9 2 and a half hours flew by. Before coming into the film, we mostly know what will happen, yet the film manages to be surprising throughout. I was afraid that it might get to pro-USA and turn into propaganda, but it didn't happen. It was very balanced. Tom Hanks gave a good performance as a very honorable and liable hero. This kind of role suits him well. That being said, the MVP of the film was Mark Rylance, who was great as a Soviet spy. Another thing I usually dislike when it comes to Spielberg is his sentimentality, which often feels forced. Again, in this case, he does it very well. Highlights of the film were

production design and the screenplay. It felt like I was transported to 1950s Brooklyn and Berlin, everything from the way people were dressed, cars, look of the streets. Everything is top notch. As for screenplay, I already mentioned how it manages to be surprising even though we basically know what will happen.

Example 6.3 shows an instance where a Netflix review of the film *Beasts of No Nation* (2015) where the user quickly goes from the plot of the movie, and the reality in Africa it portrays, to his/her own circumstances in Colombia. This participant stresses the importance of thinking about reality in the world at large. In this way, place emerges as an aspect that is intertwined with this user's identity due to this self-disclosure, especially as he/she positions himself/herself as someone who belongs to a country that has experienced similar hardships to those depicted in the film. Additionally, time appears as the current challenge that the world faces, which —according to the user— we should not only think about, but also do something to help. Time, thus, involves not only this user's personal experience, but also the experience of people around the world.

Example 6.3 - No username or date of publication provided, Netflix LATAM-

Es una película increíblemente triste y cruda pero no exagerada. Es la historia que viven muchos niños en el mundo, y no solo en África, en mi país Colombia tenemos el mismo drama. Es una película para pensar sobre el mundo en el que vivimos y no quedarnos con los brazos cruzados, pero sobre todo es para pensar en nosotros mismos, en lo afortunados que somos de no vivir en ese infierno.

[*It's an incredibly sad and raw film but not over the top. It's the story that many kids around the world live in, and not just in Africa, in my country Colombia we have the same drama. It's a film that makes you think about the world we live in and to not stay with our arms crossed, but even more it makes us think about ourselves, in how lucky we are not to live in that hell*].

Other stories can involve the relationship between the global and the local. In Chapter 2, I discussed the notion of scale from the perspective of sociolinguistic research and how scholars such as Blommaert (2010) have pointed out the need for researchers from this field to examine the different connections between the global and the local. Although this may imply a focus on space, Blommaert, Collins and Slembrouck (2005) note how both spatial and temporal scales provide a connection between macro conditions and

micro processes. Drawing on this work, Baynham (2015) points out the extent to which scales can function in temporal and spatial dimensions within narratives, as well as the role that indexicality plays in them. In this sense, he suggests that one option for understanding the issue of scale in narrative analysis is "to expand and become sensitive to the notion of what counts as spatio-temporal orientation, to recognize the regimes and orders of indexicality that are being brought into play both to construct and to draw on shared knowledge" (2015: 133). The following post, shown in Example 6.4, constitutes an example of how scale comes to the fore in the data. This IMDb user tells a story about not being able to initially understand the 1989 Hollywood film *Tango & Cash*, with Sylvester Stallone and Kurt Russell in the starring roles. The systematic observations that I carried out during the data sampling and data collection allowed me to notice that this particular poster comes from India: not only does he disclose so himself —as well as his gender— on more than one post, but he also shows a vast amount of knowledge on Bollywood cinema throughout his contributions to the discussion thread. Furthermore, this user does not really follow the instruction of discussing films that participants have watched 'last week', although this is really an exception in the data.

Example 6.4 - *Hoochie Coochie Man*, 15 July 2015, IMDb -

The previous fortnight I re-watched some '90s action flicks I had seen long ago:

Tango & Cash (1989) (*Andrei Konchalovsky*):

As a pre-teen, watching this on HBO Asia was a blast even though I could hardly understand any of the banter and just about follow the plot. Not that there was much of that to follow. Two good cops, one bad guy, one frame-up, prison break, intimidation, explosive showdown. That's what I could understand and that was enough for me.

Now, years later, now that I can understand spoken English in American accents as well as have a lot more understanding of an experience with 80s cinema, cop flicks, machismo in cinema intermingled with gay subtext, a lot of points that were previously lost upon me have come to light.

The bad guy played chomping-stompingly by Jack Palance - is he THE crime overlord, or just a kind troubleshooter for the other crime lords? He seems to be less of your average mafia boss and more of a megalomaniac Bond villain, that brings me to my next point.

Not a single frame of the film has got the teensiest connection with reality. If I wanted to be derisive, I would dub it a macho fantasy of an oversexed kid living in a dripping basement with a typewriter and a few papers. the climax is not just an average action movie showdown, it is straight out of a James Bond movie. The bad guy has a lair which the heroes have got to infiltrate with a RV crossed with a monster truck.

In this case, the passing of time is noticeable from the beginning of the post, in which the narrative starts when the participant was a pre-teen who watched HBO Asia. Thus, there is distance between the storying of the reported event (initially watching the film as a teen) and the temporality of the timestamp that appears on the review (July 2015). It is this distance that allows users to reflect retrospectively upon their lives, whether that is related to experiences with popular culture or other aspects of their selves, such as travelling or education (Georgalou, 2015: 29).

A significant element of the narrative above is where the user positions himself within his own story. This user first situates himself as a pre-teen whose ethnicity and sociocultural reality gains importance when he recognises having had problems understanding the banter between the characters and being barely able to follow the plot. The situation has changed when the teller situates himself in the present time ("Now, years later"), after becoming more familiar with the language, the genre, etc. In other words, in this story the user portrays himself as someone who had to become familiar with a sociocultural setting different than his own in order to comprehend the details of a Hollywood film such as *Tango & Cash*. Although he downplays this by writing that there was not much plot to follow anyway and that what he could understand was enough, it is only after overcoming two obstacles that he could notice aspects of the movie that were not clear before. These two barriers were linguistic (being able to understand 'American accents') and sociocultural (getting acquainted with a genre such as 'cops flicks', with Hollywood cinema from the 1980s, and with storytelling nuances like machismo in movies being intermingled with a seemingly gay context).

Finally, this review shows a participant discussing a film he has seen more than once, which is an example of a *multiple-viewing story*. I discuss this type of narrative in the next section.

6.3 Multiple-viewing stories

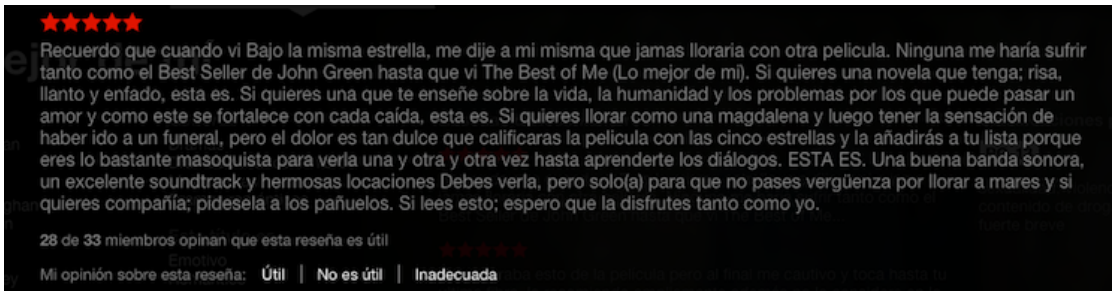
An aspect of small stories that I noted in Section 3.6.4 is the fact that they can present themselves through different genres, whether it is 'breaking news', 'stories to be told', 'projections', or 'shared stories' (Georgakopoulou, 2007). As for the types of narratives that can be found in my data, I propose another genre: *multiple-viewing stories*, i.e., narratives that involve users revisiting certain films and how not only their perception of them may have changed, but also the extent to which they discuss changes in their own lives between each viewing. As noted (see Section 6.2), users in the data do not really tell *big stories* about life-changing events, and this also applies to *multiple-viewing stories*, where the main point of discussion is the participants' impressions of films they have seen more than once. In other words, *multiple-viewing stories* work in a very specific setting (in this case, the three sites in the data) and for a very specific purpose (sharing reviews), which echoes De Fina and Georgakopoulou's (2012: 117) claim that small stories "should be seen as discourse engagements that engender specific social moments and integrally connect with what gets done on particular occasions and in particular settings".

A third of the 787 posts that I coded as stories, out of the total of 1,822, were narratives of this kind, a finding that gains strength if we take into account that most of the discussions on the three sites tend to involve new releases. As I will show (see Section 6.4), other prominent forms of storytelling in the data are second stories and instances of collective remembering.

Even though, as has been stated throughout this thesis, there is a sense of recency in many of the productions that are reviewed due to the topics that bring these users together (e.g., 'Which films have you seen *recently*?'), that does not mean that they do not also share stories about their personal connections with specific movies over time. As Vásquez (2014a: 172) maintains when she discussed what kind of reviews "lend themselves to more narrative accounts", time plays an essential role, since she maintains that they involve a sequential and durative dimension, which occurs over time, and entails a number of stages or steps. An example of this in Vásquez's data would be a review of a hotel on TripAdvisor, which usually involve a sequence of events between booking a hotel and the final evaluation after having stayed there.

Figure 6.2 below not only brings a more emotional dimension to the fore, but also includes a more noticeable interactional aspect, as I will show below. In terms of its narrative components, we can see how it starts with the pronoun 'I' and the cognition verb 'remember'. This verb (plus *that*-clause) is classified as an epistemic verb that signals likelihood in Biber's (2006: 92) scheme. What is more noteworthy about the use of this verb with regard to its connection with narratives is how, together with other cognition verbs such as *think* and *figure*, it can be employed as a storytelling device (Kärkkäinen, 2003) by which the teller offers his or her own opinions in regards to what is being told. However, aside from cognition verbs, there are also verbs in this review that signal specific emotions that this user experienced during the film, such as pain, laughter, suffering, and anger. As argued, bringing emotional content to a review distinguishes online reviewers from professional film critics, who normally do not disclose the sentiments that a film may have caused in them (see Section 2.2.3). Moreover, as can be seen at the bottom of Figure 6.2, 28 out of 33 Netflix LATAM users who rated this review considered it 'useful', which makes it one of the most positively regarded posts from this site in the data (see Section 5.5), which makes this quite personal review (in the sense that this user shares the aforementioned feelings this film triggered) one that seems to have struck a chord with those users that 'liked' it.

Figure 6.2 Screenshot of Netflix review ("Recuerdo que cuando vi…")



[*I remember that when I watched The Fault in Our Stars, I told myself that I would never cry because of another film. No film would make me suffer like the Best Seller from John Green until I saw The Best of Me. If you want a novel that has; laughter, tears and anger, this is it. If you want something that teaches you about life, humanity and the problems that a romance can go through and how it strengthens with every fall, this is it. If you want to cry your eyes out and then feel as if you had gone to a funeral, but the pain is so sweet that you will rate the movie with five stars and add it to your list because you are enough of a masochist to watch it again*

and again until you learn the dialogue, THIS IS IT. A good score, an excellent soundtrack and beautiful locations You must see it, but alone so you don't feel embarrassed by crying so much and if you want some company; ask the tissues for it. If you read this; I hope you enjoy it as much I did].

- No username or date of publication provided, Netflix LATAM-

Another aspect of this narrative, in terms of how it is told, is that —as stated above— it begins with the first person singular, *I*, but then switches to the second person singular, *you*. This pronoun seems to serve two functions: one is to engage with the audience in phrases such as '*If you want a novel that has; laughter, tears and anger, this is it*'. As soon as the pronoun shifts from the first person singular to the second person singular, so does the spatio-temporal deixis, which turns to the present. As Perrino (2015: 141) notes, "very often the fusion of the story with the storytelling event coincides with a communicative act such as a self-presentation that the storyteller tries to project in the interaction", thereby aligning the there-and-then of the narrated event with the here-and-now of the storytelling event. The fact that this user did indeed give this film five stars and that the post started in an intimate way makes it more likely that the events described (feeling as though having gone to a funeral, but rating it with five stars and watching repeatedly) are personal instead of hypothetical. In this sense, I maintain that this is a 'multiple-viewing story' mainly due to the phrase '*because you are enough of a masochist to watch it again and again until you learn the dialogue*', which —if we follow this notion of the teller seemingly using the second person singular to talk about himself/herself instead of the first person singular pronoun— suggests that he/she is implying that this was the case for him/her.

In Example 6.5, user *Perspective_of_Uncertainty* starts a review for the film *Johhny Guitar* (1954) referring to his earlier self, thereby positioning himself vis-à-vis time (Georgalou, 2015), as usually happens with multiple-viewing stories, where users offer details about their perceptions of the film at hand during different moments of their lives, as well as how certain circumstances of their lives may have changed between these viewings. There is also the use of a discourse-level evaluation strategy, the slang term *nah*, to indicate a lack of conviction at the idea of keeping the 7 score that 'his earlier self' had originally given to *Johnny Guitar*. Another element of this review that takes us back to the findings discussed in Chapter 5 is the extent to which genre is mentioned. By arguing that *Johnny Guitar* presents genre subversion because it portrays

the usual ‘bad guys’, e.g., bank robbers and capitalists, as ‘good guys’, *Perspective_of_Uncertainty* implies sufficient knowledge of this type of film to have developed certain expectations that this particular movie defies. Similarly, being able to recognise the combination of genres like melodrama and western also supposes a familiarity with them that allows this participant to note such a mixture. In this multiple-viewing story, these criticisms arise for this user once the novelty of the film, i.e., watching it for the first time, is gone and all these flaws come to the fore. In this narrative, then, the experience of watching this film changes for the worse after revisiting it.

Example 6.5 - *Perspective_of_Uncertainty*, 9 August 2015, IMDb –

Johnny Guitar (Nicholas Ray, 1954) (rewatch) 6+/10 (from 7) Out of respect for my earlier self who appreciated the film for its gender subversion (mannish women calling the shots), genre subversion (unapologetic capitalists and bank robbers are the good guys, the people on the side of the law who want to get them are the bad guys), genre mix (psychosexually charged melodrama and western), political allegory (McCarthy, communism) and its influence on 'Once Upon a Time in the West' I considered keeping the 7, but nah. Great elements for sure, but with the novelty gone their mere presence failed to elicit much excitement as I found what was done with those things lacking, which also means that in my experience it fits in well with the rest of Nicholas Ray's work with other films that don't live up to their amazing potential. Films like 'In a Lonely Place' and 'Bigger Than Life' ought to be some of my favourite films, but they are not.

Conversely, Example 6.6 shows an instance where a user’s perception of a film has remained positive throughout the years. IMDb user *unneededdirection* discusses his/her trajectory with *Dune* (1984) and how his/her opinion regarding this film has not gone down, even if it may have certain shortcomings. This member even cites nostalgia as the main reason for him/her preferring *Dune* over other films directed by David Lynch, even though they may be better. In other words, this is a case in which emotional reasons prevail over considerations regarding the film’s quality.

Example 6.6 - *unneededdirection*, 6 September 2015, IMDb –

Dune (1984) I recognise that this film is extremely flawed and one of Lynch's lesser works... and I love it more than some of his better ones for nostalgic reasons. This was one of my favourite films as a kid, and despite its flaws, I can't get over my love for it. I really enjoy a lot of the bizarre Lynch touches he brought to the film, and the story (while much better in the book) is as enjoyable as ever. 8/10.

At times, personal narratives of a reviewer's 'relationship with the film' can involve aspects of their lives like family members who are, or have been, part of the multiple film-watching experiences. For instance, in Example 6.7, user *ZHOD* writes about revisiting *Beau Geste* (1939) and how the appreciation for that film is something that his father passed on to him.

Example 6.7 - *ZHOD*, 28 September 2015, HiFi Chile –

Beau Geste, esta película le encantaba a mi viejo y el me heredó su gusto por ella... la volví a ver el fin de semana... es bien entretenida.

[*Beau Geste, my old man used to love this film and I inherited my appreciation for it from him… I watched it again over the weekend… it's quite entertaining*].

The example above shows one of the stories in the data that does not elicit a response that focuses on the narrative itself, that is, the other participants in the discussion do not respond to the story. However, the sole act of sharing this narrative with other people could be what makes this story interactional: De Fina (2016: 478) draws on Goodwin's (1986) claim that narratives become joint enterprises as soon as someone tells them to another person, and adds that this is also the case when it comes to online environments, since "tellers shape their stories in view of their possible audiences and audiences interact with stories". There are, however, more explicit ways by which people co-construct stories and shape them collectively, which is what I focus on in the next section.

6.4 Co-constructing stories

In the following two sections, I argue that several factors come into play within co-constructions of stories in the data, such as participation frameworks, knowing participation, and spatio-temporal and personal deixis. Another important factor to take into consideration regarding users telling stories online is that these narratives not only help participants to construct their own identity, but also to develop a sense of community (Rodriquez, 2013). Within these online communities, thus, members position themselves and others on the basis of a particular experience (Angouri, 2015), although there is a caveat in this case: the experience is shared, on the one hand (i.e., having watched the same film), but it can also be different depending on the user (i.e., they may have watched it at a different time to other reviewers, at a different place, at the cinema, at home, alone, with other people, etc.).

In the following section, I explore what is understood by *second stories*, as well as how they present themselves in the data.

6.4.1 Second stories

In her work on narratives on discussion forums, Page (2012b) applies Sachs'(1995) notion of *second stories*, which she defines as "stories or story episodes that follow a narrative that has been told either immediately before, or in close proximity to, the turns that have preceded it" (Page, 2012b: 30). Second stories also signal a noticeable parallel with the first story by matching certain aspects of it, something that Sacks (1995: 771) describes as the desire to establish a common ground or shared experience between the two tellers. These stories, which are affiliated in content, might not be placed next to each other within a discussion, due to the asynchronous and collective nature of this type of communication (Page, 2012b: 35).

Second stories could thus function as "a way of showing that the second teller had paid attention to the first teller's utterance, and was confirming the first teller's actions as appropriate and relevant to the current discourse" (Page, 2012b: 30). In doing so, users who introduce a second story include a pragmatic signal of alignment to a story told by

another person (Page, 2012b: 35). As noted (see Section 5.5.1), knowing participation represents one of the forms of alignment that can be applied to online platforms, an issue that remains relatively unexplored within digital communication (Georgakopoulou, 2016). Knowing participation works on the basis of shared knowledge between people, which can cause "certain members of the audience in a position to align with the stance in the original posting and to elaborate on, amplify and co-author it" (Georgakopoulou, 2016: 179. Moreover, knowing participation can present itself in many forms, such as commenting on selfies on Facebook or on spoof videos on YouTube (Georgakopoulou, 2016, 2017). Considering these different ways in which knowing participation can occur online, I argue that users in my data align with others through an aspect that is key for this thesis: knowledge. As opposed to knowing participation that may take place on Facebook, or even YouTube, the users of the sites in the data do not necessarily 'friend' or 'follow' one another online, yet they do interact and display instances of shared knowledge about cinema and their respective experiences around it. Thus, knowing participation, in this case, is shaped by shared cultural repertoires.

An example of a second story that involves knowing participation occurs after IMDb user *TheBlackBear* writes about having rewatched *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968) and gives it 10 stars out of 10. That same day, member *Iris* replies with his own second story, as shown in Example 6.8. Once again, time plays a role, since *Iris* emphasises that *2001: A Space Odyssey* has been his favourite '*of all time for the past six years*'.

Example 6.8 - *Iris*, 21 December 2015, IMDb - [36]

A Space odyssey is the most perfect movie I have ever seen. Everything about this movie is just so exquisite, whether it's the choice of music or the visuals. Has been my favourite movie of all time for the past six years, no movie has come even close to dethroning it.

Iris's second story prompts *TheBlackBear* to give more details of his own experience of watching *2001: A Space Odyssey*, which again contrasts the initial expectations that someone had regarding a given film (in this case, *TheBlackBear*'s friends) and their

[36] When there is more than one posting in the examples provided, I decided to group them together (as can be seen in Example 6.14). In this way, it should become clearer that I am showing actual interactions, as opposed to postings without any connection to one another.

reaction to the movie itself. In this way, the kind of knowing participation being carried out here has to do with *The BlackBear* aligning with *Iris* in regards to how much they like this particular film, but it is also shown in terms of how *The BlackBear* elaborates on *Iris*' own account with a second story. It is worth pointing out that *TheBlackBear* even describes watching the film as a '*spiritual experience*', which constitutes yet another example of the pivotal role that experience has in these reviews.

- *TheBlackBear*, 21 December 2015, IMDb –

I watched it with two other people that had never seen it before, and despite their doubts when we first started watching it, by the end they were genuinely in awe of it, and said it was like nothing else they'd ever seen. It genuinely doesn't feel like a movie. It's more like a spiritual experience.

During the week when this interaction occurred, user *Iris* was the OP of the *Which films did you see last week* discussion thread. As one of the tasks of the OP involves keeping the discussion going, the way in which *Iris* seems to prefer to reply to the other participants is to initiate a narrative, in the form of a second story. Here, the ethnographic perspective included in the mixed-method approach of this thesis was particularly fruitful, especially taking into account how ethnography can allow us to observe, for instance, the repetition of storytelling roles, actions and positions (De Fina, 2003: 46). Specifically, my ethnographic observations over time, in terms of storytelling practices, consisted of focusing on how active participants such as *Iris* usually engaged with the rest of the reviewers, and to what extent that engagement resulted in these users telling stories. In this case, the pattern that emerges is *Iris*' preponderance to respond with second stories as OP. The participation framework (Goffman, 1981) of this community, then, involves an OP being the speaker and, at the same time, the *animator* (the 'sounding box' of the message), *author* (the person who the story belonged to in the first place) and *principal* of the post (the individual who takes responsibility for the story; see Section 2.4.1 for more details). The second story is told in direct reply to a specific ratified hearer, but also to a multiplicity of unratified hearers, i.e., all the potential users (both usual participants in the conversation and lurkers) who may read the second story.

Other OPs can have a different approach when it comes to this task. Participant *Perspective_of_Uncertainty*, for instance, can often be sarcastic when replying to other members. Example 6.9 gives us a glimpse of this: instead of responding in a straightforward manner that he has not seen any of the films reviewed by the other user (like *Iris* tends to do, for example), *Perspective_of_Uncertainty* mockingly replies to *Harry_the_Third*'s reviews:

Example 6.9 - *Harry_the_Third*, 29 November 2015, IMDb -

Couple of re-watches:

Nostalgia 8/10

Certified Copy 9/10 (close to a 10, actually).

- *Perspective_of_Uncertainty*, 30 November 2015, IMDb –

I got nothing for you today. Thank you, come again.

That same week, that is, the same days in which *Perspective_of_Uncertainty* was in charge of being OP, another participant writes a lengthy post about coming back to the discussion thread, as well as reviewing seven films. *Perspective_of_Uncertainty*'s response only consists of one word and an exclamation mark, as opposed to engaging with the other participant's reviews, like other OPs tend to do.

Example 6.10 - *Perspective_of_Uncertainty*, 30 November 2015, IMDb -

Hi!

The participation framework on this discussion involves roles that do not change on a weekly basis, since it always involves one OP and the rest of the participants sharing their thoughts on films they have watched, but what does change is the way in which the different participants perform these tasks. In the case of being OP, a member such as *Iris* will provide his own second stories of the films being reviewed as a way to fulfil the duty of interacting with the rest of the participants, whereas other may not

necessarily provide narratives as a way to respond to other people's evaluations (and also may be more or less friendly, sarcastic, enthusiastic, etc.).

Second stories can often be multiple-viewing stories as well. They may be, at the same time, a way of aligning with another user by telling a story (i.e., a second story) and a narrative that involves users revisiting films repeatedly (i.e., a multiple-viewing story). Indeed, Example 6.11 shows instances in which users discuss their personal experiences of watching a film more than once in response to another participant's account. Again, user *Iris* responds to participant *master-hare*, who had written reviews of several films, and the experiences he/she had with them. *Iris* then provides a second story in response to that post, concentrating on the only film from the list that he has watched, *Gladiator* (2000).

Example 6.11 - *master-hare*, 16 August 2015, IMDb -

Gladiator (2000) – Ridley Scott

The computer effects detract from what could have been a convincing story and the whole political angle feels half-baked, but the film generally succeeds as the emotional action/drama epic it aspires to be. Three stars.

- *Iris*, 16 August 2015, IMDb-

I've only seen Gladiator (2000) of yours. It's one of those movies that I really liked when it came out and but upon recent review it's gone down. I don't think it's a bad movie, but I don't care for it anywhere near as much as I initially did. 6/10

In this example, the alignment is twofold. On the one hand, the telling of a second story is a form of alignment with the author of the first story, as stated at the beginning of this section; on the other hand, participants can add another layer to this alignment if they share the other user's opinion on a film, i.e., whether they both liked it or not. This kind of alignment becomes clearer when user *master-hare* —the participant who had originally written about *Gladiator*— replies to *Iris* that same day. Interestingly, this represents yet another instance in which watching a film is characterised as an *experience* —in this case, an *unforgettable* one— when this participant was a teenager,

but one that does not seem to have the same impact years later. Consequently, this is another occurrence of users positioning themselves against time in order to convey how their stance on a film has changed through the years.

- *master-hare*, 16 August 2015, IMDb –

Same here, I was 14 at the time and it was just a spectacle to watch on the big screen. An unforgettable experience not unlike Titanic. Sadly, while a good film, the magic is not quite the same.

As stated above, some of these second stories can also be multiple-viewing stories. Example 6.12 below represents another instance in which users' expectations are connected to genre. User *Iris*, again acting as OP and once again telling a second story, reveals two instances where he had specific expectations due to both *Don't Look Now* and *Rosemary's Baby* being classified as 'horror films'.

Example 6.12 - *Iris*, 22 November 2015, IMDb -

Hey hey [Unneeddirection], hope you're well.

When I first saw Don't look now I was expecting a horror movie so I was left disappointed. It took me years to pick up the courage to revisit it and only did so very recently and to my surprise I actually liked it. It is a very moving movie about a couple's attempt to get over the death of their daughter.

I had the same problem with Rosemary's Baby, which is also classed as horror but on first watch I failed to enjoy it. On a recent revisit I rather enjoyed it. Like Don't look now, it is high on atmosphere and less on actual horror.

Stasiak02, a different user to the one *Iris* was addressing, offers his own personal experience, including a mention of the October Challenge, an initiative developed by the *What films did you see last week* discussion participants in which, in honour of Halloween being celebrated that month, members would watch horror films and comment on them. After *Iris* argues that *Don't Look Now* and *Rosemary's Baby* do not really belong to the horror genre, *Stasiak02* aligns with this stance, employing the

epistemic stance adverb of certainty *really* (Biber, 2006: 92) to signal the degree to which *Don't Look Now* does not seem to fit within the horror genre.

- *Stasiak02*, 22 November 2015, IMDb -

Don't Look Now really is glorious. It was my favorite of the October Challenge. I agree with your take on the genre accuracy. It really doesn't feel like a horror at all, until the 3rd act.

Second stories in these sites, then, require the telling of a first story for them to occur. A similar scenario, in the sense that it also involves participants co-constructing stories, has to do with collective remembering online, on which I focus in the next section.

6.4.2 Collective remembering

Vásquez (2012, 2015) maintains that while several sociolinguistic studies on digital media have explored temporality with a focus on immediacy, more recent research (e.g., Georgalou, 2015; Heyd & Honkanen, 2015) has started to concentrate on online spaces where people "engage in collective remembering, imaginings of the past, and performances of nostalgia, by invoking shared, socio- historically specific, cultural references" (Vásquez, 2015: 6). In this way, stories that involve remoteness depart from the here-and-now notion that sites such as Facebook tend to gather, particularly through questions such as 'What are you doing right now?' (see Georgalou, 2015).

One of the main aspects of sharing experiences with other people is the way in which finding individuals with similar experiences "can be an affirming event that offers a framework for understanding or expressing cataclysmic as well as ordinary experiences" (Schuman, 2005: 55). As shown in the next three examples, one way to involve the audience is through the use of personal pronouns.

Example 6.13 - No username or date of publication provided, Netflix LATAM -

esta película tiene la magia de trasportarte del hoy hacia el ayer, si alguien tiene coincidencia en su vida con esta historia sabrá a que me refiero, todas las historias de amor se parecen, esto te involucra, te hace revivir un amor de la adolescencia, y te hace ver tu relación de hoy, sin mas que agregar soy romántico y a la vez esta película me ha hecho ver que uno siempre estará enamorado de su primer verdadero amor aunque pasen los años.

[*this film magically transports you from today to yesterday, if someone sees the parallel with their own lives they'll know what I'm talking about, all love stories are similar, this pulls you in, it makes you relive a teenage love affair, and it makes you look at your current relationship, nothing more to add than that I'm a romantic and at the same time this film has made me see that one will always be in love with their first true love even as the years go by*].

Both this review and the one above include the presence of the generic *you*, which, through the use of the present tense, "retains the listener within a behavioural context located in the present moment of storytelling performance" (Page, 2012b: 160), even if, as happens in these cases, the reviewers are emphasising how these films transported them to their past.

Example 6.14 - No username or date of publication provided, Netflix LATAM-

Es una película que te hace voltear a tu pasado y recordar lo que no fue… La actriz principal es muy bella tanto en la juventud como en su madurez, aunque la trama puede presentar escenas un tanto inverosímiles la historia puede ser muy real, a veces, el miedo suele separar a las personas pero los milagros y las extrañas coincidencias pueden ocurrir. maneja mensajes que son muy importantes como son la generosidad, el perdón y la trascendencia. muy buena película!

[*It's a film that makes you go back to your past and remember what wasn't… The lead actress is very beautiful both in her youth as well as in her maturity, although the plot may present certain scenes that are a tad unlikely the story can feel quite real, sometimes, fear tends to separate people but miracles and strange coincidences can happen. it deals with messages that are very important such as generosity, forgiveness and transcendence. Very good film!*].

The user in Example 6.15 also utilises the type of generic pronoun *you* that, aside from occurring with verbs in the present tense, includes the addressee, that is, it entails an

engagement with "an unlimited number of others […] who might listen at a later point in time, positioning the individual listener within a wider community of storytelling participants" (Page, 2012b: 161*).*

Example 6.15 - No username or date of publication provided, Netflix LATAM -

Me encantó!!!! divina historia de amor! súper recomendable!!! Linda historia, te vuelve a tu infancia. Lástima el final, pero el resto divina.

[*I loved it!!!! A divine love story! Super recommendable!!! Beautiful story, it takes you back to your childhood. A pity about the ending, but the rest is divine*].

While the posts shown above involve an engagement with the audience through the use of a specific pronoun, Example 6.16 displays HiFi Chile participants in an actual conversation, one where what starts as a joke told by one participant, *fracas*, gives way to a second story and then to *fracas*'s clarification as to what films he really saw. As can be seen below, *fracas*'s post is basically him greeting the rest of the participants after being away from the site ('*it's been a while*') and stating that he watched *Jurassic Park* and *Terminator*. The important detail of this post, and which allows us to understand the ensuing responses, is that *fracas* does not specifically mention the instalments from those two sagas that had come out at the time, *Jurassic World* (2015) and *Terminator Genisys* (2015); rather, he alludes to the original titles for both sagas, which premiered in 1993 and 1984, respectively.

Example 6.16 - *fracas,* 24 July 2015, HiFi Chile -

Hola chicos, tanto tiempo !

Lo último que vi fue Parque Jurásico y Terminator.

[*Hi guys, it's been a while!*

My latest viewings were Jurassic Park and Terminator].

As noted, this post prompts replies from two different users, who use the 'quoting' tool to copy *fracas*'s original post and then add their own contribution. First, participant *ian anderson* simply responds, a day later, in disbelief, a sentiment that is emphasised by

two vernacular digital literacy practices: the use of many exclamation marks and the elongation of vowels (Giaxoglou, 2015).

- *ian anderson*, 25 July 2015, HiFi Chile –

Yiiiaaaaa!!!!!

[*C'moooon!!!!!*]

The following day, another participant, *peacemaker*, replies to *fracas*'s post. In light of *fracas*'s reference to 'the older' *Jurassic Park* and *Terminator* as opposed to 'the newer' *Jurassic World* and *Terminator Genisys*, *peacemaker* tells a second story about having seen the premiere of *Jaws*, something that actually happened back in 1975. The irony of the post is enhanced by *peacemaker* referring to the director of the film, world-renowned and three-time Oscar winner Steven Spielberg, as an *unknown bloke, but who could become the next big thing*. What is more, the humorous tone of the post is further emphasised by a smiley face. Finally, *peacemaker* ends the post by switching to English and citing The Parable of the Prodigal Son from the Bible as a way to welcome back *fracas.*[37]

- *peacemaker*, 26 July 2015, HiFi Chile –

Ajá... y yo la última que vi fue el estreno de una de suspenso que pinta buena: "Tiburón", dirigida por un tipo desconocido, pero que promete.

☺

Welcome back, prodigal son!

[*Uh-huh… and the last one I saw was the premiere of a suspense one that looks good: Jaws, which was directed by an unknown bloke, but who could become the next big thing*].

☺

Welcome back, prodigal son!

[37] This last aspect was somewhat confounding for me, since the biblical reference could have been part of a pattern or at least a frequent form of intertextuality, but this is the only allusion to the Bible I came across during the data collection.

Unlike what tends to happen on other platforms such as Facebook or Twitter, the replies here are certainly not immediate. On the contrary, the first response is a day after *fracas*'s post, while the second reply was written a day after that (26 July). Then, one day later (27), *fracas* replies to both, telling them different stories in relation to their posts.[38] In this way, *fracas* first quotes *ian anderson* and then continues with the vintage references by writing that he saw *Jurassic Park* and *Terminator* on an old format (VHS), once again including a smiley face so as to stress the humorous tone of the post.

- *fracas*, 27 July 2015, HiFi Chile -

En serio !!! Las vi en VHS en la tele de 21", pantalla cuadrada… ☺.

[*Seriously* !!! *I saw them on a VHS on a 21" telly, square screen …* ☺].

Following *fracas*'s reply to the first user who responded to his post, he then quotes *peacemaker*'s second story about having watched *Jaws* and contributes his own recollection of going to the cinema to see it during the 70s.

- *fracas*, 27 July 2015, HiFi Chile –

jajaja Fui al estreno de esa película, en los 70's. El cine estaba lleno, así que quedamos sentados pegados a la pared de la izquierda y en primera fila. La cabeza del tiburón se veía completamente distorsionada y apenas se podía leer los subtítulos. Les dije a los que venían conmigo que nos fuéramos y que nos devolvieran la plata en la boletería. No fuimos los únicos, así que resultó. Nos devolvieron los morlacos y volvimos una semana después, pero esta vez nos aseguramos de quedar al medio. La cabeza del tiburón ahora resultaba más razonable y hasta menos intimidante. La película se estrenó poco antes de las vacaciones, no sé, enero o algo así. En la playa todo el mundo preguntaba antes de meter un pie al agua.

Gracias por la bienvenida pa' . ☺

[*Hahaha I went to that film's premiere, in the 70s. The cinema was full, so we had to sit against the wall to the left and in the front row. The shark's head looked completely distorted and you could barely read the subtitles. I told those who were with me that we should leave and ask for*

[38] The issue of how much time tends to pass between every interaction on HiFi Chile certainly depends on each engagement and on the users themselves, but I never encountered one post triggering dozens (or more) of responses within the first few minutes after it was written, something that, in my experience, does happen on Facebook, Twitter, etc.

our money back at the box office. We weren't the only ones, so it worked. They gave us our money back and we came back a week after that, only now we made sure to sit in the middle. The shark's head was now more reasonable and even less intimidating. The film premiered right before the Summer break, I don't know, January or something. At the beach everyone hesitated before dipping their toes in the water].

Thanks for the welcome, pops. ☺

Finally, *fracas* reveals what he really watched, which were actually *Jurassic World* and *Terminator Genisys,* that is, the latest installments of the sagas.

There are no further replies from either *ian anderson* or *peacemaker*.

- *fracas*, 27 July 2015, HiFi Chile –

Me cito a mí mismo:

En realidad fui a ver las últimas, Jurassic World y Terminator Genisys. Me llevaron los niños ... que ya no son tan niños. Vi todas las anteriores con ellos. Así que esta vez les tocó a ellos llevarme y ponerme una caja de cabritas en las manos. Y aproveché de verificar lo que se ha hablado del sistema audiovisual de esas películas (IMAX 3D). Eso da para un análisis más adelante. Saludos.

[*I'll quote myself:*

What I really went to see were the latest ones, Jurassic World and Terminator Genisys. The kids took me… who are no longer that young. I watched all the others with them. So now it was their turn to take me and put a box of popcorn in my hands. And I took the opportunity to check what's been said about those films' audiovisual system (IMAX 3D). That deserves further analysis. Cheers.

In the exchange above, the user who started that particular interaction, *fracas*, would not have told a story about having watched *Jaws* around forty years before without another participant, *peacemaker*, telling his own second story about seeing that film first - it is *peacemaker*'s story about having watched *Jaws* that prompts *fracas* to offer a story of his own. What is more, *fracas*'s initial post did not even mention *Jaws*: it is *peacemaker* who brings it up and then the storytelling ensues. What starts as one member teasing another for seemingly having seen old films turns into a recollection by *fracas* about

going to the cinema to see a different movie from the ones he wrote about in the first place. Furthermore, that second story involves both the prominence of time (the 70s, Summer, etc.) and space (going to a cinema that no longer exists, going to the beach, etc.). Similarly, *fracas*'s story about the films he saw recently, i.e., *Jurassic World and Terminator Genisys,* also involves the presence of time (having kids, who are no longer that little, and who were the ones that took him to see it this time around) and space (going to an IMAX 3D function).

In a more general way, the above exchange illustrates the convivial kind of interactions that characterise the discussions on HiFi Chile, whereby humour —and even friendly teasing— are signalled by the use of emoticons and interjections such as *Jajaja* [*Hahaha*]. The prominence of this type of interaction on this particular platform — which can also be found in the IMDb dataset and, to a lesser extent, on Netflix LATAM— echoes Baym's (1995a, 1995b, 2000) influential work on online ethnography and how humour can shape both self and group identity within a given community.

Another HiFi Chile interaction also entails a scenario in which different users start sharing their memories about a given topic. Here, however, the remembering is triggered by one user's account (i.e., *Terracota*) about having seen the film *Pixels*, but ends up being about playing arcade games and visiting record stores in the city of Santiago, Chile, during the 80s. This user mentions several streets and places within Santiago as a part of his recollection (e.g., streets and boroughs such as Vitacura, Providencia, Apoquindo; shopping centres like Los Cobres, Drugstore, and Omnium). In this sense, the mention of a street brings together personal identity, memory and place (Hoelscher & Alderman, 2004), since these users depict themselves as people whose experiences were shaped by these places at some point of their lives. As argued above, knowing participation can take place when people align or elaborate on a specific stance and, in this case, it involves sharing, and expanding on, memories of a common activity (e.g., playing arcade games) that these participants used to do.

Example 6.17 - *Terracota*, 27 July 2015, HiFi Chile -

Mmmm....me tinca que la película como tal es mala...pero me entretuve harto. Seguramente porque viví la época de los flipper y juegos Atari en los "Delta" a fines de los 70, principios de los 80 igual que los pendejos protagonistas.

Esperaba la mesada del viernes para jugarme fichas en el local de los Cobres de Vitacura, en el Drugstore de Providencia o en el Omnium de Apoquindo...el problema es que sólo tenías tres vidas y GAME OVER. Envidiaba a los huevones que tenían mucha plata para comprarse las fichas que quisieran y se mandaban los medios puntajes...

Pero creo que lo más importante es que el haber ido a esos antros me hizo cruzarme con dos disquerías que traían discos importados de USA, una en los Cobres de Vitacura y la otra en el Drugstore (o tal vez era la misma que se cambió?). En todo caso, cuando un día se me acabaron las fichas, pasé a la tienda de discos y quedé pegado al techo cuando el compadre puso a Hemispheres de Rush. Las próximas tres mesadas se fueron en ese disco y de ahí para adelante no paré con el Rock Progresivo...

En fin, película solo recomendable para cincuentones nostálgicos de los principios de los ochenta...

[*Mmmm… I suspect that the film as such is bad… but I had a good time. Surely because I lived through the time of arcades and Atari games in the "Deltas" during the late 70s, early 80s, so I was as young as the main characters.*

I waited for the Friday allowance to play my chips on the arcades in Los Cobres shopping centre of Vitacura, in the Drugstore of Providencia or in the Omnium of Apoquindo… the problem was that I only had three lives and GAME OVER. I envied the lads who had a lot of money to buy all the chips they wanted and scored these massive high scores…

But I think the most important thing is that having gone to those dumps made me encounter two record shops that brought imported discs from the USA, one in Los Cobres of Vitacura and the other in the Drugstore (or maybe it was the same one that moved?). Anyway, when I ran out of chips one day, I went to the record store and couldn't believe it when the bloke started playing Hemispheres by Rush. The next three allowances went on that record and from then on I didn't stop with progressive rock.

Anyway, a film that's only recommendable for fifty-somethings who are nostalgic for the early 80s…].

Terracota finishes his recollection with a reference to time that seems to be used for the specific purpose of recommending the film to a particular age group, that is, people around their fifties who have a sense of nostalgia with respect to the early years of a decade (the 80s). Time, then, not only acts as a nostalgic performance amongst these individuals, but is also deployed with the concrete goal of endorsing a film.

Another user, that same day, replies to *Terracota* and offer his own recollection, even adding the name of one of the record stores mentioned in the initial post.

- *Narniano*, 27 July 2015, HiFi Chile -

La disquería del Drugstore se llamaba Fusión era la mejor de Santiago, traía harto ECM.

[*The record store at the Drugstore was called Fusión it was best in Santiago, they brought a lot of ECM*].

As a reply to this, yet another participant shares his own memories of buying records from that store and how he would enjoy buying them more than purchasing music now, due to the effort it entailed.

- *jrb121* , 27 July 2015, HiFi Chile –

Fusión, que recuerdos, juntando peso sobre peso para comprar un disquito... se disfrutaba mas yo creo, al ser mas esfuerzo.

[*Fusión, such good memories, saving penny after penny to buy a little record… it was more enjoyable I think, since it involved more effort*].

Much like in the stories derived from *fracas*'s post, the same person who started a particular interaction is the one who ends it, thereby bringing the collective remembering to an end. Here, *Terracota* quotes *Narniano*'s post about one of the record stores being in a particular shopping centre in Santiago, responding with an enthusiast *Yes!*. *Terracota* does not show much certainty concerning the record stores of that time (note the epistemic verbs *think* and *seems*; Biber, 2016: 92), but he does appear to acknowledge that lack of certainty, as he finishes the post by kidding about Alzheimer's catching up to him. By doing so, *Terracota* not only offers another example of the online conviviality that characterises this community by making fun of himself, but also

comments on his own memory, which, along with the recollections of the other participants, had been what prompted this discussion.

- *Terracota*, 29 July 2015, HiFi Chile –

Si! Creo que la otra tienda en el Cobres de Vitacura era Circus...parece que también estuvo en el segundo piso de los locales comerciales de Providencia entre Holanda y Tobalaba...el Alzheimer se acerca…

[*Yes! I think the other store in Cobres of Vitacura was Circus… it seems like it was on the second floor of the shooping centres of Providencia between Holanda and Tobalaba… Alzheimer's is approaching…*]

In yet another example of collective remembering on HiFi Chile, user *Wildo* starts by telling the rest of the participants what he is going to watch in the very near future (*now*), namely a film starring actors Bud Spencer and Terrence Hill, who acted together in a number of comedies during the 1980s.

- *Wildo*, 15 September 2015, HiFi Chile –

Yo ahora voy a ver Dos puños contra Río, puta que son buenas las películas del Guatón y el Rubio (Más conocidos como Bud Spencer y Terence Hill) jajaja

[*Now I'm going to see Double Trouble, those films with the Fat One and the Blonde One (better known as Bud Spencer y Terence Hill) are so f*cking good hahaha*].

That same day, nearly an hour and half later, another user, *RiDuque,* quotes *Wildo* and posts:

- *RiDuque*, 15 September 2015, HiFi Chile –

A propósito, ¿alguien sabe de dónde conseguir películas de los susodichos?

[*By the way, does anyone know where to get films with those guys?*]

Wildo then suggests watching them on YouTube, as well as recommending one specific film.

- *Wildo*, 16 September 2015, HiFi Chile –

Hoy por hoy las pillas todas en YouTube, te recomiendo esa cuando son pistoleros y se ponen a jugar Póker, que manera de reírme jajajaja , se llama Trinidad creo.

[*Nowadays you find them all on YouTube, I recommend the one where they are gunslingers and they start playing poker, how I laughed hahaha, it´s called Trinidad I think*].

Yet another user, *ZHOD*, joins the conversation by not only quoting *RiDuque*, but also referring to him by his username and adding information as to where these films could be purchased. It is worth pointing out that, while *ZHOD* does provide specific details about where to buy the film as opposed to telling an actual story, this user also mentions streets and places of Santiago where these movies could be bought.

- *ZHOD*, 16 September 2015, Hi Fi Chile -

[RiDuque].. en el paseo "San Agustin", en el centro, hay como 2 o 3 tiendas que venden DVD e incluso VHS de varias películas "antigüitas", ahí he encontrado en su momento películas de "Abott & Costello", "Los 3 Chiflados", etc

Puede ser que ahí tengan... son las tiendas que dan a la salida de calle San Antonio.

[[*RiDuque*].. *in Paseo San Agustín, downtown, there are two or three stores that sell DVDs and even VHs of several "oldies", that's where I've found films with "Abott & Costello", "The 3 Stooges", etc..*

They may have them there… those are the stores right at the exit of San Antonio street].

Although directly addressed by *ZHOD* with this recommendation, *RiDuque* only responds to *Wildo*'s post about the film where the two actors play poker, and adds, directly talking about his memories:

- *RiDuque*, 16 September 2015, HiFi Chile –

Yo la que recuerdo siempre es la del coro: Lalalalalalalalala.....

La otra, que estan en un bar y salen en Honda Civic de primera generación, y lo hacen subir y bajar la escalera. Que manera de reírme!

[*The one I always remember is the one with the choir: Lalalalalalalalala.....*

The other one, where they are at a bar and go out in a first generation Honda Civic, and make it go up and down the stairs. How I laughed!].

In a reversal of roles, it is *Wildo* who now quotes *RiDuque*'s post and writes, less than half an hour later, and adds his own knowledge of one of the film's titles.

- *Wildo*, 16 September 2015, HiFi Chile –

Jajaja es que todas son muy buenas !!! la del coro se llama juntos son dinamita y peleaban para que les devolvieran un auto chico de carreras.

[*Hahaha all of them are very good !!! the one with the choir is called Watch Out, We're Mad! and they fought to get a small race car back*].

In sum, both second stories and collective remembering are types of interactional storytelling that are either about the film-watching experience or may start with a discussion on cinema, but end up providing other details of the teller's lives, e.g., whether they are parents, the fact that they were of age to go and watch *Jaws* at the cinema in the 70s, their record-buying habits during the 80s, etc. By doing so, users incorporate the 'mundane' of their daily life into a specific online community (Angouri & Sanderson, 2016).

6.5 Conclusions

In this chapter, I concentrated on answering the following research question:

What role do narratives play in the discursive construction of 'expert' identities?

Having analysed stories as part of reviews where users place themselves and their "own experiences and perspectives at the centre of the text" (Vásquez, 2014a: 151), the findings obtained through the qualitative approach carried out for this chapter can be divided into three main patterns. The first of them deals with personal experience and the extent to which it shapes the narratives in the data, as well as how time and place play a role within these narratives. In this regard, I have argued that the narratives in the data constitute 'small stories', as they move away from the 'big' autobiographical narratives that usually involve some kind of disruptive event in a person's life. Another difference with 'big stories' is that narratives in the data can present themselves as co-constructions, shaped by different members of these sites. Even though I have already pointed out the importance of experience in relation to online film reviews (see chapters 4 and 5), in this case, personal experience emerges specifically as a form of narrating users' 'relationship with a film' (Vásquez, 2014a: 151).

The role of experience, in turn, is intertwined with both multiple-viewing stories constituting an example of relationships with films over time (the second main pattern), and also with co-constructing stories as an instance of alignment between participants (the third main pattern). The interactional dimension of storytelling can also lead to instances whereby discussing films gives way to various narratives regarding aspects of people's selves beyond their film-watching experiences. I will focus on each of these findings in detail below.

Personal experience, as noted above, is an essential aspect of narratives and my data is no exception. It is important to reiterate that the way in which these narratives of personal experience are told constitute small stories, not just because some of them can be small in length: the majority —if not all— of them have more to do with mundane tellings than narratives of complications. In the case of multiple-viewing stories, reviewers position themselves and these personal experiences against time, thereby showing a certain stance they may have had when they were children, teenagers, and how both their lives and stances may have changed between then and now. The notion of going back repeatedly to the same film can, in some instances, also be connected to the tension between the local and the global, in the sense that the symbols and codes represented in a Hollywood film, for example, could be hard to grasp for someone who comes from another sociocultural reality.

The third main finding sheds light on how both second stories and collective remembering are examples of co-constructed narratives within these reviews. The participation frameworks within these platforms —particularly on IMDb— can shape the way in which second stories come to the fore, i.e., users adopting specific roles (OP, for instance) within communicative processes. A particular aspect that is present throughout the interactional dimension of storytelling on these sites is that of alignment (see also Chapter 5). It is worth noting how both second stories (Page, 2012b) and knowing participation (Georgakopoulou, 2016) have been identified as forms of alignment online. In this way, knowing participation, that is, the possibility of aligning with another posting and the ability to elaborate, amplify or co-author it (Georgakopoulou, 2016, 2017) through shared knowledge can be prompted by the discussion of a film, which might end up with recollections about the remote past (the 70s, the 80s, a specific Summer, etc.) or about certain spaces (shopping centres, streets, etc.), allowing identity, memory and place to be interwoven (Hoelscher & Alderman, 2004). The construction and negotiation of expertise, that is, the ways in which they show and share their knowledge about film, gets intertwined with memories of the reviewers' lives, which can involve various places and moments in time, thereby offering more insights into these people's selves.

Overall, the findings in this chapter follow Vásquez's (2014a) work on online film reviews, but also depart from it. Although her study offers valuable insights as to the ways in which users show their aforementioned 'relationship with films' (p. 151), as well as how they tell stories by positioning their experiences at the centre of the review, one of her conclusions in relation to online film reviews is that they rarely involve narratives, especially when compared to reviews of hotels, restaurants, etc. It should be noted that I not only concentrated on Netflix, which is the site Vásquez analysed for film reviews, but within my data, people sharing their experiences vis-à-vis specific films is not the exception, even on Netflix itself. Furthermore, the findings align with studies on digital media where performances of nostalgia or remembering can be observed, as well as the role that popular culture has in these recollections (Georgalou, 2015; Heyd & Honkanen, 2015; Vásquez, 2015). These findings, in turn, move away from research on sites such as Facebook or Twitter, where users discuss what has happened recently, sometimes even seconds before they actually share their thoughts, feelings or experiences with others.

Chapter 7: Concluding discussion

In this chapter, I provide a summary of the findings in relation to my research questions. In order to do this, I offer the main conclusions for each analytical chapter (i.e., chapters 4-6). Subsequently, I state how this thesis contributes to existing studies in digital communication. Finally, I explore potential avenues for further research.

7.1 Summary of findings

In this thesis, I set out to research the ways in which people discursively construct the identity of experts when they write online reviews. In addition, I analysed how reviewers negotiate expertise, especially considering the fact that the discussions on The Internet Movie Database, Netflix Latin America, and HiFi Chile involve the exchange of evaluations.

I analysed the data through a mixed-method approach that included corpus linguistics, the application of ethnographic principles, coding, and narrative analysis. In this way, Chapter 4 is informed by corpus linguistics and coding (of *discourse-level evaluation strategies*); Chapter 5 entails a mixture of corpus linguistics, coding (of *references to place* and *references to time*), and drawing on ethnographic perspectives; and Chapter 6 combines narrative analysis, coding (of *stories*, *references to place* and *references to time*), and the application of ethnographic principles.

As I noted in Section 1.3, the research questions I set out to answer are the following:

- What are the most common linguistic resources that users employ when they share their evaluations of films?
- In what ways do users deploy references to cinematic genres in order to construct expertise?
- What role do narratives play in the discursive construction of 'expert' identities?

Even though I will provide an outline of the findings of each analytical chapter below, it bears reiterating that the discursive construction of expertise was at the forefront of this thesis. In this regard, an overarching finding throughout the three chapters is that expertise is not only shown through knowledge, as professional film critics tend to do so as to demonstrate their own expertise, but also in the ways in which users share their personal experiences and feelings in relation to cinema. The fact that they are able, or feel comfortable enough, to do so, in turn, stems from the kind of communities I looked at. As argued (see Section 6.4), the online conviviality I identified on these platforms even shapes the co-construction of narratives by which reviewers go beyond showing how much they know about a given film: they also discuss their memories, sensations, and different aspects of their lives.

In Chapter 4, I set out to answer the first research question, that is, I concentrated on the most common lexico-grammatical and discourse-level evaluation strategies in the data. The rationale behind this decision was to start the analysis with a top-down approach that would look at the main patterns in the reviews, and would then be complemented by a bottom-up approach in the next two chapters. The combination of corpus linguistics and coding shed light on different patterns. Firstly, the results showed a clear salience of reviews that only consisted of text, on the one hand, and amicable posts —as opposed to neutral, aggressive or ironic— on the other (see Section 4.2). As I stated in Section 2.3.2, the affordances and constraints that each site present play an essential role both in terms of the content that users generate online and how they interact with other people. Although the ways in which participants present themselves and engage with their peers is mostly textual, tools such as quoting (on IMDb and HiFi Chile) and rating other people's reviews (on Netflix), allow users to respond to a particular member's contribution directly, even as far as providing a metric of how well-received a review might have been. The coding results also allowed me to confirm in a more systematic way what I had already noted through Herring's (2007) faceted classification scheme (see Section 3.2.4), in terms of how posts in the data were mostly textual and nonconfrontational.

The aforementioned mixture of corpus linguistics and coding provided a way to approach these posts from different perspectives. The corpus linguistics analysis, especially when I looked at keywords (Section 4.4) and collocations (Section 4.5), confirmed the statistical saliency of two issues: references to genre as a way of showing

knowledge, and the different experiences around film-watching that these users narrate. Additionally, both the analysis of keywords and the coding results of discourse-level evaluation strategies indicated a tendency for both positive and negative stances. Therefore, concentrating on stances in terms of their frequency (Section 4.6) and, again, the discourse-level strategies utilised by the reviewers (Section 4.7), helped me to observe a combination of occurrences in which the participants' familiarity with, and knowledge of, film are enhanced. Some of the ways in which this occurs are the use of particular epistemic stances (e.g., *really*, *always*), as well as attitudinal stances towards the productions being reviewed, (e.g. *surprisingly*, *sadly*, etc.) and, finally, attitudes and emotions such as incredulity, surprise or disappointment (e.g., the use of rhetorical questions, the repetition of letters, etc).

Even though the first finding mentioned above, that is, references to genre, might be expected in reviews about film, it does depart from other work on constructions of expertise on film reviews, where references to genre are not a salient way by which participants show their knowledge (Vásquez, 2014a). Moreover, as I argue in Chapter 5, the ways in which genre emerges in the data are manifold, going from traditional genres (e.g., action, comedy, etc.) to genre categorisations that revolve around time and the different slang terms by which users discuss Hollywood cinema. The second main finding of Chapter 4 (i.e., words that allude to experiences of film-watching, such as *rewatch* or *viewing*) was unexpected. From my observations of the sites before collecting the data, I knew that several of its members would offer their personal experiences with the films they watched, or watched repeatedly, but I was not expecting the corpus linguistics findings to necessarily shed light on this. The fact that they did only increased my attention towards the role that narratives have in the data.

In Chapter 5, I answered the second research question by analysing how references to genre constitute a way of constructing expertise. Users show their knowledge by establishing links between films from a particular genre or comparing different genres, as opposed to boasting about the amount of films they have seen in their lifetimes. Whereas Chapter 4 focused more on patterns through a top-down approach, Chapter 5 —as well as Chapter 6— involved a bottom-up approach, which relied less on corpus linguistics and more on the qualitative methods that my approach included, i.e., drawing on ethnographic principles and coding. I provided examples of the other two main ways in which users tend to approach online expertise, i.e., by admitting that they are not

experts or by claiming to be very familiar with or knowledgeable of the topic at hand (see Vásquez, 2014a). While the findings in Chapter 4 had shed light on the saliency of genre in terms of references to specific cinematic aspects in the data, in Chapter 5 I approached the issue of genre in three ways: how reviewers referenced traditional genres (Section 5.3), how other categories emerge through the coding process (Section 5.4), and the ways in which genre plays a role in the negotiation of expertise among reviewers (Section 5.5).

For the references to traditional genres, I focused on the multi-keywords that the corpus linguistics analysis had indicated in Chapter 4. Through the use of concordance lines for these multi-keywords, I was able to observe the extent to which users discussed how the film they watched aligned or not with what they expected from that particular genre. Users develop a sense of familiarity with genres through repeated viewings of movies that belong to these film categories, thereby expecting certain features when they sit down and watch a production (Neale, 2000; Schatz, 1981). Thus, I argue that reviewers construct expertise by showing their knowledge of the aspects that characterise each genre, which they demonstrate by either discussing their expectations, establishing comparisons to the same or other genres, etc.

I also identified instances whereby certain groupings of films started to emerge through the participant's reviews. Essentially, reviewers frame these categorisations either in terms of time (Section 5.4.1) or through their stances on Hollywood cinema (Section 5.4.2). In the case of time, several films were described as either good to pass the time (and to be watched in a particular moment, e.g., a Sunday, a rainy day, with the family, etc.) or, conversely, the recommendation in other cases was to stay away from certain films, which was emphasised by the personal experience of having wasted time watching them.

In addition, Hollywood can also be referred to as a genre. Although film studies scholars tend to focus on the *blockbuster* for their research, users in the data show different ways by which they refer to Hollywood films. In this case, their pejorative view on Hollywood is emphasised by the use of specific slang words that not only convey these users' negative stance, but also their cultural identity. As noted, these linguistic forms are shared in translocal digital environments, where the local, that is, slang terms from Argentina or Central America, still shows some resiliency even after the uptake of global cultural flows (see Blommaert, 2010; Uimonen, 2009).

In both of these cases, either by recommending films in terms of time or through criticism towards the usual Hollywood formula, users position themselves as experts by telling the other members of the community (and their readers at large, including lurkers) what should be watched and what should be avoided. In this sense, some films may not be a masterpiece, but they will provide a good time, or they may be the typical Hollywood production, but they will allow for an entertaining movie anyway (hence, they should be watched); conversely, other movies may only waste people's time or they will be an interchangeable Hollywood film, which will be deemed disposable (hence, they should not be watched).

The final main finding of Chapter 5 related to the role that genre plays within the negotiation of expertise in the data and how alignment on these sites is shaped by the design of the specific platforms (see Section 2.4.2). Even though these three sites offer fewer affordances than others such as Facebook or YouTube, e.g., following other users, tagging, retweeting, etc., a feature such as stating that a Netflix review was 'useful' provides users with the possibility of aligning or misaligning with other members. In the case of alignment, the top 5 reviews with more 'likes' (borrowing a term from sites such as Facebook or Instagram), involved references either to the genres themselves or to how the particular genre of the film made the reviewers feel, i.e., whether they thought a comedy was funny or if they cried with a drama. Another affordance, in this case provided by IMDb and HiFi Chile, is the quoting tool. As indicated in Section 5.5, this tool can be used not only to align with someone else's stance on a film that belongs to a particular genre, but can even be used in conjunction with other affordances, such as providing the YouTube link for the full movie. Moreover, after quoting another user's review, participants can expand on their knowledge of that given genre through text, i.e., through similarities or differences with other films of that genre and where that particular film's quality stands within that body of work. As I also showed in Section 5.5, there were instances where a user attacked another over the films he/she has watched, referring to that list of films as *hipster and pathetic*, but, as the coding results show, aggressive instances of this kind are far less salient in the data than amicable, constructive exchanges.

Finally, in Chapter 6, I set out to answer the third research question by concentrating on the ways in which personal experience plays a role in the narratives that the reviews in the data include. As stated throughout the thesis, a key aspect of constructions of

expertise is how knowledge is shown. A relevant claim made in this chapter for the purposes of where the narratives in my data lie is that they constitute *small stories*. As argued (see Section 6.2), they depart from the concept of *big stories* for several reasons, such as the fact that they usually pertain to everyday, as opposed to life-changing, experiences; that they take place without being prompted by an interviewer/researcher; and that they can be co-constructed instead of featuring a sole teller.

The coding results indicated the prominence of a type of narrative I proposed to coin as *multiple-viewing stories* (see Section 6.3), that is, narratives of personal experience related to films that users have seen repeatedly, whereby they not only share whether their stance on the film has changed, but also how certain aspects of their life may have evolved between each viewing. Within these stories, time and place play a crucial role: users go back to who they were years ago, when they originally watched a film, even referring in some cases to 'their earlier selves'. In relation to space, reviewers may share how being exposed to films from other cultures required repeated viewings through the years to properly grasp the content of the film. In this way, there is a tension between the local (the participant's own cultural reality) and the global (an industry with an all-encompassing reach such as Hollywood).

As already noted in Chapter 5, an important aspect of the negotiation of expertise has to do with the ways in which users align or misalign with others. In terms of instances of storytelling, the overall *online conviviality* (Tagg, Seargeant & Brown, 2017) in the data that I first showed in Section 4.2 can be noticeable when it comes to co-constructing stories (see Section 6.4). The presence of second stories in the data show the extent to which users attempt to establish a common ground with others, but also how they confirm the relevance and/or appropriateness of the first tellers' stories (Sacks, 1995; Page, 2012b). In the case of both second stories (Section 6.4.1) and narratives of collective remembering (Section 6.4.2), this knowledge is shared, but —at the same time— the experiences of the users are different. In other words, they may have watched the same film, but when, where, with whom they saw it depends on each person. It is this knowledge that tends to be shared of the films themselves that allows participants to engage and align with one another, specifically through knowing participation (Georgakopoulou, 2016). Furthermore, particular participation frameworks (Goffman, 1981) such as the OP who has to reply to other users' contribution —more specifically, to a ratified addressee (the teller of the first story) and a collection of

unratified addressees (all the other potential readers of the narrative)— proved to be a fruitful scenario for second stories to emerge, depending on the specific member (or speaker) who was in charge of being OP. As noted, some of the users in the data did indeed choose to respond to their peers by providing their own second stories, whereas others would be more straightforward and simply state whether they agreed with the other participants' evaluations or whether they had watched the specific films being discussed or not.

The role of time and space is also prevalent in stories that are co-constructed. Multiple-viewing stories, second stories, and collective remembering involve the act of sharing memories not only of film-watching experiences, but also of different spaces, including cinemas, countries, cities, shops, and streets. By doing so, the construction of expertise that is shown through the reviewer's 'relationship with films' (Vásquez, 2014a) emerges as multi-layered, with different memories of time and place playing a part. In fact, streets gain even more importance if we consider how references to them within the context of sharing memories has been said to bring together personal identity, memory and place (Hoelscher & Alderman, 2004). Finally, person deixis can be used to involve other participants: the generic *you* is deployed in narratives where users emphasise how some films can take *you* (i.e., whoever reads that review) to a remote time (childhood, meeting a first love, etc.), thus not only involving the reader through addressing him/her, but also by telling the story in the present tense, thereby locating the narrative in the present moment of the storytelling (Page, 2012b).

In sum, the findings of this thesis show that users discursively construct the identity of an expert prominently through text, with semiotic means such as photos, emoticons, videos and GIFs complementing some of these posts. In addition, the overall amicable tone of the reviews provides a fertile ground for instances of alignment whereby constructions of expertise are positively taken up, whether it is through the use of the sites' affordances or through storytelling. If we go back to the claim that the internet is, among other factors, responsible for the death of expertise (see Section 2.3.4,) I argue that the data suggest the opposite. Through sites such as IMDb, Netflix Latin America and HiFi Chile, knowledge is shared, asked for and appreciated by users. Moreover, sharing knowledge on these platforms often leads to the telling of personal experiences, which makes this practice go beyond mere facts, names and dates, thereby including stories, memories and feelings connected to specific film-watching moments.

7.2 Contributions to knowledge

With this thesis, I intend to add to current research within digital communication on both a general and a local level. At the outset of this study, my main objective was to contribute to research on the ways in which online users discursively construct and negotiate the identity of experts, a goal that remained to the very end of the thesis. In this respect, and as already pointed out (see Section 7.1), I argue that the discursive construction of expertise in the data shifts away from the ways in which professional film critics show their knowledge: not only do these online reviewers show how much they know about a film, they also enhance this sense of familiarity by sharing how those movies made them feel and the different personal experiences that may be connected to having watched them, sometimes more than once (see Section 6.3). I also claim that this study adds to the existing literature by focusing on an under-represented aspect of discussions of popular culture (film), as well as including online reviews, which have been largely unexplored from a linguistic standpoint (see Vásquez, 2014a). Furthermore, my findings align with work that views these discursive constructions of expertise as negotiated (see Thurnherr, von Rohr and Locher, 2016; van Nuenen & Varis, 2017). In this thesis, however, I have argued that constructing expertise involves more than showing knowledge: it also entails sharing experiences and feelings. Therefore, my analysis departs from previous research that focused solely on the ways in which online reviewers show how knowledgeable they are, without necessarily sharing their emotions (cf. Mackiewicz, 2010).

In addition, although stories on online platforms have received attention for decades, narrative scholars (see De Fina, 2015, 2016) have pointed out how there is still scope for studies that explore the different ways in which storytelling is done on digital media. Nonetheless, even if this thesis incorporates notions and analytical frameworks from other research on online reviews and storytelling (cf. Vásquez, 2014a), it also departs from some of the findings that those studies yielded. For instance, the data in this thesis show different types of narratives within film reviews, as opposed to Vásquez's findings regarding posts on the same topic, which she counts as exceptions within her Netflix data (2014a). Also, the overall tone of the posts in the data seem to be much more amicable and nonconfrontational than in other studies on online platforms where tone was also coded (cf. De Fina, 2016). This finding seems to go against the overall

perception that the internet is full of violence, attacks, and insults; although that may be true for some platforms, this is yet another instance where context is of paramount importance: whether a particular site involves hostile or amicable exchanges will really depend not only on the platform itself, but also on the specific communities it encompasses. Thus, this thesis sheds light on communities were aggressive interactions are exceptions to the norm, while amicable, encouraging exchanges represent the kind of *online conviviality* (Tagg, Seargeant & Brown, 2017) that the members of these communities attempt to achieve.

On a local level, there has also been an overall tendency to concentrate on sites where the majority of users write content in English. As someone from a Latin American and Spanish-speaking country, I identified platforms where participants write in Spanish as another element that deserves more scholarly attention. My rationale before studying the data was that looking at different Spanish-speaking countries would allow me to not only understand certain slang terms from these various nations, including my own, but also to incorporate them into the analysis as part of the vernacular type of writing that characterises digital platforms. Indeed, the findings shed light on the ways in which slang terms from countries such as Chile, Mexico and Argentina are deployed as resources to evaluate films online: as argued (see Section 4.7.1), although these slang terms may be used by reviewers who have different sociocultural backgrounds, they tend to be utilised for the same purpose, i.e., to emphasise a particular stance, either positive or negative. In this regard, I intend to add to studies in digital communication that go beyond the use of the English language and take into account the ways in which the internet can be multilingual; in this case, I aimed at showing this linguistic diversity by incorporating examples of different Spanish-speaking repertoires within Latin America, with a particular focus on the Chilean context.

From a methodological standpoint, with this thesis I underscore the importance and benefits of applying a mixed-method approach to digital communication. By combining a top-down and bottom-up perspective, I was also able to obtain patterns from more than one standpoint, e.g., corpus linguistics shed light on certain issues (e.g., keywords, multi-keywords, and collocates) than coding would not necessarily uncover and vice versa. These two methods were complemented by drawing on ethnographic principles, which helped me to understand the contextual aspects of these sites, and small stories research, which allowed me to look at the narratives in the data from the point of view

of stories that are usually fragmented, messy and that deal with people's quotidian lives. By doing so, this methodological approach aligns with researchers who have made the case for the use of corpus-assisted qualitative analysis (Page, 2018).

7.3 Implications for further research

As noted throughout this chapter, due to the design of these platforms, the analysis was predominantly focused on text. Nevertheless, looking at other platforms where there is a stronger presence of photos (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, Tumblr, etc.) or videos (e.g., YouTube, again Facebook and Instagram, etc.) could allow researchers to focus on multimodality and the ways in which these semiotic means are also employed to show knowledge about a particular topic online.

Another platform that has seemingly not received much scholarly attention from digital communication studies thus far is Reddit. Looking at my own data, Reddit is not that different in terms of layout to discussion forums; indeed, Reddit users themselves often describe the platform as a forum. However, when I first started this thesis, in early 2014, and during the next couple of years, I was not a Reddit user, although I was aware of its existence, particularly the 'Ask Me Anything' (AMA) sessions that celebrities conduct with their fans. It was only during the final year of writing the thesis that I started browsing Reddit more often, which made me realise to a fuller extent how it brings together people with similar interests, whether it is popular culture, sports, health, etc. Consequently, Reddit appears to represent fertile ground to analyse common-identity communities (Schwämmlein & Wodzicki, 2012) in further research. It should be noted, however, that Reddit involves certain limitations when compared to some of the sites I analysed in this thesis. For instance, users cannot attach pictures or videos directly onto their posts, although they can post links that are opened on a different *tab* or page. In other words, even if Reddit is similar to discussion forums or sites where people can write reviews, it has certain constraints that researchers should include in their analysis in terms of how that affects particular communicative practices. Reddit, then, constitutes another example of a platform where text remains at the forefront of the site's design and user's interactions, thereby not only fulfilling a different role to the

aforementioned ‘more visual’ platforms (e.g., Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube, etc.), but also representing a continuity of sorts with other sites like those explored in this thesis.

Finally, I have attempted to emphasise the importance of researching other languages other than English that people use online and how, in the case of Netflix LATAM and HiFi Chile, users deploy slang terms for different purposes, e.g., to index stances, to align with their peers, etc. As I have argued, being Chilean, as well as Latin American, has allowed me to interpret the context in which words such as *fomingo*, *loco*, *pochoclera*, *palomera*, and *malena* are used in the data, and how they emphasise particular points of view within online evaluations of films. While I hope to contribute to that goal with this thesis, more work needs to be done in this regard, whether it is through more research that looks at the different Spanish-speaking cultures that communicate on digital platforms, or other languages from around the world. This does not mean, of course, that researchers should move away from analysing the use of English online, but studying other cases could lead to a more diverse field, one that incorporates different cultures and ways of communicating.

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APPENDIX A Ethical approval letter

Research Ethics Office

Franklin Wilkins Building
5.9 Waterloo Bridge Wing
Waterloo Road
London SE1 9NH
Telephone 020 7848 4020/4070/4077
rec@kcl.ac.uk

KING'S College LONDON

Ignacio Jose Antonio Lopez Escarcena

22 May 2015

Dear Ignacio Jose Antonio

LRS-14/15-0569 - Constructions of expertise, globalization and (dis)agreements in vernacular online discourse of film reviews

Thank you for submitting your application for the above project. I am pleased to inform you that your application has now be approved with the provisos indicated at the end of this letter. All changes must be made before data collection commences. The Committee does not need to see evidence of these changes, however supervisors are responsible for ensuring that students implement any requested changes before data collection commences.

Please ensure that you follow all relevant guidance as laid out in the King's College London *Guidelines on Good Practice in Academic Research:* http://www.kcl.ac.uk/college/policyzone/assets/files/research/good%20practice%20Sept%2009%20FINAL.pdf

Ethical approval has been granted for a period of **one year** from 22 May 2015 . You will not be sent a reminder when your approval has lapsed and if you require an extension you should complete a modification request, details of which can be found here: http://www.kcl.ac.uk/innovation/research/support/ethics/applications/modifications.aspx

Any unforeseen ethical problems arising during the course of the project should be reported to the panel Chair, via the Research Ethics Office.

Please note that we may, for the purposes of audit, contact you to ascertain the status of your research.

We wish you every success with your research.

Yours sincerely,

A & H Research Ethics Panel REP Reviewer

Recommendation: Approved with Provisos

Minor corrections to Information Sheet and Consent Form.

Major Issues (will require substantial consideration by the applicant before approval can be granted)
None

Minor Issues related to application (the reviewer should identify the relevant section number before each comment)

None

Minor Issues related to recruitment documents

Information Sheet and Consent Form:
1. There should be no red text in the final recruitment documents.
Remove the red text in the headers: "***THIS IS A TEMPLATE FORM AND MUST BE TAILORED TO MEET THE NEEDS OF YOUR STUDY***"

2. Withdrawal date of winter 2018 is probably too vague, not to mention winter in Chile or winter in the UK are different. It is better if an exact date were provided, such as 31 January 2018 or similar.

Advice and Comments (do not have to be adhered to, but may help to improve the research)

See above.

APPENDIX B Collocates for keywords

(This appendix only includes the keywords that collocated significantly with other words. In this sense, some keywords in both the Netflix and HiFi Chile corpora only collocated with punctuation marks, which is why they are not featured here).

1) IMDb

Collocates of *rewatch* to the left and right

recent	recent	recent	recent	recent	←
use	use	use	use	a	
on	on	on	on	on	
could	could	could	a	to	
up	well	a	to	I	
→	it	I	trilogy	trilogy	trilogy
	the	it	I	do	do
		the	8	first	first

Collocates of *cinematography* to the left and right

beautiful	beautiful	beautiful	beautiful	beautiful	←
cinematography	has	has	the	the	
great	best	the	and	and	
has	great	and			
best	and	in			
→	is	is	is	secrets	secrets
	and	and	but	is	light
	was	with	and	and	cinematography
		was	was	but	is

Collocates of *viewings* to the left and right

subsequent repeat first few	subsequent repeat first few	subsequent repeat first few	subsequent repeat first few	subsequent repeat few time		←
→	this of	past this it	past week this	past week last	past week last	

Collocates of *rewatches* to the left and right

on to	on	on	on	on		←
→	-	the	the	of the	of the	

Collocates of *thriller* to the left and right

mystery american fi sci superb crime action decent comedy drama	mystery american fi sci superb crime action decent comedy drama	mystery american fi sci superb crime action decent comedy an	mystery fi sci american crime superb action comedy best good	mystery fi american crime comedy good		←
→	with about	excellent with about I	performances repeat excellent with	performances repeat excellent viewing	form repeat performances excellent	

Collocates of *rewatched* to the left and right

I	I	I	I	I		←
→	it	it	it	recently it	recently it	

Collocates of *comedies* to the left and right

best one of	best one of	best of the	best the of	best		←
→	ever of	ever made of	ever made of	ever made of	ever made of	

Collocates of *masterpiece* to the left and right

made eve horror a	ever horror made a	made a an not	a an is	a		←
→	from of in	from one as of	cinema one my from	genre cinema my one	genre cinema my one	

Collocates of *watchlist* to the left and right

my on to	my on to	my on to	my on to	my		←
→	-	-	-	-	-	

2) Netflix

Collocates of *aburrida* [*boring*] to the left and right

muy película es	muy película es	muy película [*film*] es [*is*]	muy es película [*film*]	muy [*very*] es [*is*] y [*and*]		←
→	y [*and*]	y no	y no la [*the*]	y no la	y no muy [*very*]	

Collocates of *malísima* [*awful*] to the left and right

es	es	es	es	es [*is*]		←
→	-	-	película [*film*] es [*is*]	película es	película es	

Collocates of *malísima* [*awful*] to the left and right

es	es	es	es	es [*is*]		←
→	-	-	película [*film*] es [*is*]	película es	película es	

Collocates of *entretenida* [*entertaining*] to the left and right

divertida muy historia	divertida muy historia [*story*]	divertida muy película [*film*]	divertida [*fun*] muy [*very*] es [*is*]	muy [*very*] es [*is*] y [*and*]		←
→	y [*and*]	para [*to*] pero [*but*] y [*and*]	para [*to*] lo [*what*] pero [*but*]	pasar [*pass*] bien [*well*] lo [*what*]	divertida [*fun*] pasar [*pass*] bien [*well*]	

Collocates of *predecible* [*predictable*] to the left and right

es la	es la [*the*]	es	es	es [*is*]	←
→	y [*and*]	pero [*but*] y [*and*]	pero [*but*] y	pero [*but*] y	pero [*but*] y

Collocates of *romántica* [*romantic*] to the left and right

comedia mejor buena	comedia mejor buena [*good*]	comedia mejor una [*a*]	comedia mejor [*best*] película [*film*]	comedia [*comedy*] película [*film*]	←
→	-	para [*to/for*] pero [*but*] y [*and*]	con [*with*] para [*to/for*] pero [*but*]	con triste [*sad*] buena [*good*] con [*with*] para [*to/for*] buena [*good*]	

Collocates of *pésima* [*awful*] to the left and right

peor lo	peor [*worst*] lo [*the*]	es	es	es [*is*]	←
→	-	-	-	mala [*bad*] pérdida [*waste*] una [*a*] mala	

Collocates of *reí* [*laughed*] to the left and right

me	me	me	me	me [*I*]	←
→	mucho [*a lot*]	mucho	mucho	mucho	mucho

3) HiFi Chile

Collocates of *entretenida* [*entertaining*] to the left and right

harto muy	harto muy	harto [*a lot*] muy [*very*]	muy bien	muy [*very*] bien [*quite*]	←
→	y [*and*] la [*the*]	película [*film*] y [*and*]	película si [*if*]	película si [*if*]	si [*if*] película [*film*]

Collocates of *fomingo* [*boring* + *Sunday*] to the left and right

para un de [*of*]	para [*for*] un[*a*]	un	un	un [*a*]	←	
→	-	-	-	-	-	

Collocates of *peli* [*flick*] to the left and right

gustó	gustó [*liked*]	la	la	la [*the*]	←
→	es [*is*]	es	es	es	es

Collocates of *descomprar* [*download* + *buy*] to the left and right

para [*to*]	la	la	la	la [*it*]	←
→	-	-	la [*the*/*it*]	la [*the*/*it*]	en [*in*/*on*]

APPENDIX C Common lexico-grammatical features used for the stance analyses (Biber, 2006)

1. Modal and semi-modal verbs

– possibility/permission/ability: *can, could, may, might*

– necessity/obligation: *must, should, (had) better, have to, got to, ought to*

– prediction/volition: *will, would, shall, be going to*

2. Stance adverbs

– **Epistemic**:

Certainty: *actually, always, certainly, definitely, indeed, inevitably, in fact, never, of course, obviously, really, undoubtedly, without doubt, no doubt*

Likelihood: *apparently, evidently, kind of, in most cases/instances, perhaps, possibly, predictably, probably, roughly, sort of, maybe*

– **Attitude**: *amazingly, astonishingly, conveniently, curiously, hopefully, even worse, fortunately, importantly, ironically, rightly, sadly, surprisingly, unfortunately*

– **Style**: *according to, confidentially, frankly, generally, honestly, mainly, technically, truthfully, typically, reportedly, primarily, usually*

3. Complement clauses controlled by stance verbs, adjectives, or nouns

3.1. Stance complement clauses controlled by verbs

3.1a. Stance verb + that-clause

– **Epistemic verbs**:

Certainty: *conclude, demonstrate, determine, discover, find, know, learn, mean, notice, observe, prove, realize, recognize, remember, see, show, understand*

Likelihood: *assume, believe, doubt, gather, guess, hypothesize, imagine, predict, presuppose, presume, reckon, seem, speculate, suppose, suspect, think*

– **Attitude verbs**: *agree, anticipate, complain, concede, ensure, expect, fear, feel, forget, hope, mind, prefer, pretend, require, wish, worry*

– **Speech act and other communication verbs**: *announce, argue, assert, claim, contend, declare, emphasize, explain, imply, insist, mention, promise, propose, recommend, remark, respond, say, state, suggest, tell*

3.1b. Stance verb + to-clause

– **Probability (likelihood) verbs**: *appear, happen, seem, tend*

– **Cognition/perception verbs (likelihood)**: *assume, believe, consider, expect, find, forget, imagine, judge, know, learn, presume, pretend, remember, suppose*

– **Desire/intention/decision verbs**: *agree, choose, decide, hate, hesitate, hope, intend, like, love, mean, need, plan, prefer, prepare, refuse, want, wish*

– **Verbs of causation/modality/effort**: *allow, attempt, enable, encourage, fail, help, instruct, manage, oblige, order, permit, persuade, prompt, require, seek, try*

– **Speech act and other communication verbs**: *ask, claim, invite, promise, remind, request, be said, show, teach, tell, urge, warn*

3.2. Stance complement clauses controlled by adjectives

3.2a. Stance adjective + *that*-clause (many of these occur with extraposed constructions)

– **Epistemic adjectives**:

Certainty: *apparent, certain, clear, confident, convinced, correct, evident, false, impossible, inevitable, obvious, positive, right, sure, true, well-known*

Likelihood (extraposed): *doubtful, likely, possible, probable, unlikely*

– **Attitude/emotion adjectives**: *afraid, amazed, aware, concerned, disappointed, encouraged, glad, happy, hopeful, pleased, shocked, surprised, worried*

– **Evaluation adjectives**: *amazing, appropriate, conceivable, crucial, essential, fortunate, imperative, inconceivable, incredible, interesting, lucky, necessary, nice, noteworthy, odd, ridiculous, strange, surprising, unacceptable, unfortunate*

3.2b. Stance adjective + *to*-clause (many of these occur with extraposed constructions)

– **Epistemic (certainty/likelihood) adjectives**: apt, certain, due, guaranteed, liable, likely, prone, unlikely, sure

– **Attitude/emotion adjectives**: *afraid, ashamed, disappointed, embarrassed, glad, happy, pleased, proud, puzzled, relieved, sorry, surprised, worried*

– **Evaluation adjectives**: *(in)appropriate, bad/worse, good/better/best, convenient, essential, important, interesting, necessary, nice, reasonable, silly, smart, stupid, surprising, useful, useless, unreasonable, wise, wrong*

– **Ability or willingness adjectives**: *(un)able, anxious, careful, determined, eager, eligible, hesitant, inclined, obliged, prepared, ready, reluctant, (un)willing*

– **Ease or difficulty adjectives**: *difficult, easier, easy, hard, (im)possible, tough*

3.3. Stance complement clauses controlled by nouns

3.3a. Stance noun + *that*-clause

– **Epistemic nouns**:

Certainty: *assertion, conclusion, conviction, discovery, doubt, fact, knowledge, observation, principle, realization, result, statement*

Likelihood: *assumption, belief, claim, contention, feeling, hypothesis, idea, implication, impression, notion, opinion, possibility, presumption, suggestion*

– **Attitude/perspective nouns**: *grounds, hope, reason, view, thought*

– **Communication (non-factual) nouns**: *comment, news, proposal, proposition, remark, report, requirement*

3.3b. Stance noun + *to*-clause

agreement, decision, desire, failure, inclination, intention, obligation, opportunity, plan, promise, proposal, reluctance, responsibility, right, tendency, threat, wish, willingness

APPENDIX D Stance adverbs in the data

IMDb		
Really	303	2,400.49 per million
Actually	82	649.64 per million
Probably	81	641.72 per million
Never	72	570.41 per million
Kind of	69	546.65 per million
Maybe	62	491.19 per million
Always	43	340.66 per million
Definitely	31	245.60 per million
Surprisingly	29	229.75 per million
Usually	28	221.83 per million
Netflix LATAM		
Realmente [*Really*]	22	947.17 per million
Nunca [*Never*]	17	731.91 per million
Siempre [*Always*]	13	559.69 per million
Sin duda / Sin lugar a dudas [*Undoubtedly*	13	559.69 per million
Absolutamente [*Absolutely*] [39]	9	387.48 per million
Definitivamente [*Definitely*]	4	172.21 per million
Increíblemente [*Amazingly*]	4	172.21 per million
Por supuesto [*Of course*]	3	129.16 per million

[39] Even though 'absolutely'/'absolutamente' is not included in Biber's scheme for the analysis of stance, Carretero (2012) does classify it as a stance adverb, specifically —drawing on the work of Biber *et al*. (1999)— as within the subtype of epistemic stance adverbials, i.e., those that "express the speaker's judgment about the certainty, reliability, and limitations of the proposition" (Biber *et al*.,1999: 854). Moreover, Carretero's data is in Spanish, which is precisely the language in which this word has a high level of frequency in both Netflix LATAM and HiFi Chile corpora.

Obviamente [*Obviously*]	2	86.11 per million
Evidentemente [*Evidently*]	1	43.05 per million
HiFi Chile		
Siempre [*Always*]	16	743.63 per million
Nunca [*Never*]	8	371.82 per million
Realmente [*Really*]	6	278.86 per million
Sin duda [*Undoubtedly*]	6	278.86 per million
De hecho [*In fact*]	4	185.91 per million
Lamentablemente [*Sadly*]	4	185.91 per million
Absolutamente [*Absolutely*]	2	92.95 per million
Probablemente [*Probably*]	2	92.95 per million
Afortunadamente [*Luckily*]	2	92.95 per million
Generalmente [*Generally*]	1	46.48 per million

APPENDIX E Full concordances for selected stances in the data

1) Concordance lines for *siempre* [*always*] in the HiFi Chile corpus

1	para el resto y eso va a ser así	**siempre**	!
2	mucho tiempo sin ver películas,	**siempre**	, cuando puedo ver alguna, elijo una pura
3	ha sido posteado varias veces,	**siempre**	recomendable para activar nuestras
4	GENYSIS. Entretenida, como	**siempre**	, me reí mucho con el papel de Arnold,
5	a Bin Laden, aunque como	**siempre**	le pone un poco de su cosecha
6	Michael Caine un bacán como	**siempre**	, Harvey Keitel OK. Y Madalina Ghenea
7	excelente película y como	**siempre**	, una gran interpretación del maestro Daniel
8	que le secuestran a la familia	**siempre**	jajaja. La verdad, no es mala la película
9	Tienes que ver porno. Igual	**siempre**	sabes cómo terminará..
10	últimas películas de Al Pacino	**siempre**	me da la impresión que las hace ebrio
11	músicos que desaparecieran para	**siempre**	
12	comunes.. para lo que presentan	**siempre**	este tipo de películas…
13	El protagonista	**siempre**	está al borde del colapso emocional
14	historia real, que muestra lo que	**siempre**	es sabido, EEUU una mierda (bush y cia)
15	Yo la que recuerdo	**siempre**	es la del coro: Lalala….
16	de lo poco que he visto… vimos	**Siempre**	Alice con la Julian Moore… mmm buena

1	*for the rest and it's going to*	***always***	*be that way*
2	*without having seen films, I*	***always***	*, when I can, choose one*
3	*it's been posted many times,*	***always***	*recommendable to activate our*
4	*GENYSIS. Entertaining, as*	***always***	*, I laughed a lot with Arnold's character*
5	*Bin Laden, although as*	***always***	*filmmakers put their own spin into it.*
6	*Michael Caine great as*	***always***	*, Harvey Keitel OK. And Madalina Ghenea*
7	*excellent film and as*	***always***	*, a great performance by the master Daniel*
8	*whose family is*	***always***	*kidnapped haha. Truthfully, the film isn't*
9	*You have to watch porn. You*	***always***	*know they will end*
10	*last films of Al Pacino*	***always***	*strike me as he´s drunk while making them*
11	*musicians that disappeared*	*forever*[40]	

[40] Unfortunately for the purposes of this translation, *para siempre* (or *por siempre*) means *forever.* Consequently, when it is accompanied by these prepositions, the word *siempre* takes a meaning that is still similar to *always.* In this context, however, where the user is talking about the Cuban music band Buena Vista Social Club and how some of its members have passed away, to translate this as 'musicians that disappeared *always*' would not make much sense.

12	*common.. for what these films*	***always***	*present*
13	*The main character is*	***always***	*on the verge of an emotional collapse*
14	*real story, which shows what has*	***always***	*been known, USA is shit (bush and co.)*
15	*The one I*	***always***	*remember is the one with the chorus: Lalala.*
16	*the few things I've seen we saw*	***Always***[41]	*Alice with Julian Moore… mmm good*

2) Concordance lines for *surprisingly* in the IMDb corpus

1	direction (J.J. Abrams), and – most	**surprisingly**	- the acting. Daisy Ridley and John
2	fantasy with music by Victor Herbet.	**Surprisingly**	, most of the songs are actually from
3	was excellent. So was Jonah Hill.	**Surprisingly**	. And, my god. Margot f*cking Robbie
4	there's not enough of it. It does get	**surprisingly**	bloody at times, which is a good thing
5	and interaction make this a	**surprisingly**	captivating watch. There are even a
6	found it quite bad, as it had a	**surprisingly**	cheap look to it and the story was quite
7	in many ways I also found it	**surprisingly**	clumsy at times for Kurosawa
8	instalment of the franchise was also	**surprisingly**	dark, especially when the remaining
9	and awesome villain, it was	**surprisingly**	darker than the first one, but it still
10	performance from Ullman, but	**surprisingly**	dull at times
11	from the new cast members and a	**surprisingly**	emotional turn from Harrison Ford
12	Halloween 2 I thought was	**surprisingly**	enjoyable
13	exceptional form. Mean Girls is	**surprisingly**	enjoyable comedy,
14	The Pursuit of Happyness is a	**surprisingly**	enjoyable drama with Smith on
15	are excellent and the film is	**surprisingly**	flows well at almost 3 hours
16	but it was fast paced and	**surprisingly**	funny, even if a few jokes are
17	The Gift, impressive debut JB	**surprisingly**	good. 7/10.
18	Dougherty, 2015) This was…	**surprisingly**	good. It had the right sense of humor
19	Creed (2015), Ryan Cogler -8	**Surprisingly**	good. It was very reminiscent of the
20	novel A time to kill for is	**surprisingly**	good. What did you think of Kingsman
21	The Gift I agree was	**surprisingly**	great. Mine: Earl and the Dying
22	he film has a	**surprisingly**	great cast, the cannibals looked scary
23	so is the rest of the cast. The film	**surprisingly**	highly interesting and involving

[41] In this case, the title of the film *Still Alice* (2014) was translated in some Spanish-speaking countries as *Siempre Alice*, i.e., *Always Alice*, which is why it is one it is one of the hits when one searches for this term in the HiFi Chile corpus. Moreover, the name of the lead actress is actually Julianne Moore, not Julian.

24	It's a wonderful and	**surprisingly**	mature animated film that I wish
25	concepts go, this is silly, but	**surprisingly**	not a terrible setup as it actually uses
26	backwards, this culminates in a	**surprisingly**	poignant ending, but more than
27	characters, and that was fine. But	**surprisingly**	towards the end of the film got to me
28	First Avenger I thought was	**surprisingly**	well made. It had a great 30's feel

3) Concordance lines for *usually* in the IMDb corpus

1	Tom McCarthy – 8 I'm not	**usually**	big on these talky dramas, but this one
2	, which to some extent are	**usually**	different in the same way). If it's
3	as a Soviet Spy. Another thing I	**usually**	dislike when it comes to Spielberg is his
4	, as most fantasy movies of that sort	**usually**	do for me. Horrible Bosses: The
5	he actually does what a clown	**usually**	does it. It was also kind of amusing, and
6	during a dialogue scene which it	**usually**	does not. Often times even, the music is
7	magic usually is gone, which is why	**usually**	doing my best to avoid not seeing the
8	films which have dubbing (which is	**usually**	done very well, with top-notch actors
9	The Walk (2015) – 6.5 Zemeckis	**usually**	entertains and this one was no exception
10	himself is perfectly fine with that	**usually**	find it difficult to continue with a film
11	not to get sucked into the hype, and I	**usually**	find one-shot movies exciting so it
12	in it, and the exact lines are	**usually**	forgettable, but for their emotional,
13	directed, and acted drama. Idris Elba	**usually**	gives entertaining performances but he
14	it being a film of two halves. That's	**usually**	how it is for me when I'm really into
15	I'm a fan of Jean Cocteau, and	**usually**	I like the 'Beauty and the Beast' story
16	7 Beauty and the Beast (1946) -	**Usually**	I'm a fan of Jean Cocteau, and usually
17	But although the original version (	**usually**	in Japanese, the only one I've come across
18	moments I've ever seen in a film,	**usually**	involving characters misunderstanding the
19	finish the next day, the initial magic	**usually**	is gone, which is why I'm usually doing
20	a sucker for Nazi movies although	**usually**	it's about the Holocaust or films that
21	, the humor fell flat and while I	**usually**	like horror comedies, it just couldn't
22	but I enjoy her work, inventive,	**usually**	mildly thought-provoking, sometimes
23	bows wrapping everything up, but	**usually**	no crushing defeat either; life goes on
24	at "art horror", you don't	**usually**	see in TV, but nonetheless, there isn't
25	I think in cinemas it's	**usually**	shown in two parts over the course of
26	a child is f-cking hard. So, while	**usually**	such characters could become annoying
27	And if you think that Malick	**usually**	wastes his star-studded casts, well, he
28	above the age of 12 there is	**usually**	what you've described (voice-over